

LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JANUARY 1892.

*The Three Fates.*¹

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD, AUTHOR OF 'MR. ISAACS,'
'DR. CLAUDIUS,' &C.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE sudden death of John Bond caused an interruption in the lives of most of the people concerned in this history. George Wood had received one of those violent mental impressions from which men do not recover for many weeks. It was long before he could rid his dreams of the ever-repeated scene. When he closed his eyes the white sail of the little cutter rose before them, the sharp and sudden squall struck the canvas, and almost at the same instant he felt himself once more in the cool depths, struggling with a man already almost dead, striving with agonised determination to hold his breath, then abandoning the effort and losing consciousness, only to awake with a violent start and a short, smothered cry.

Even Totty, who was not naturally nervous, was haunted by terrible visions in the night, and was a little pale and subdued during a fortnight after the accident. Mamie wore a strange expression, which neither George nor her mother could understand. Her lips were often tightly set together, as though in some desperate effort, in which her eyelids drooped and her fingers grasped convulsively whatever they held. She was living

¹ Copyright 1891, by F. Marion Crawford.

over again that awful moment when she had clutched what she had believed to be the dead body of the man she loved, and, almost unaided, she knew not how, had dragged it into the boat. There was another instant, too, which recalled itself vividly to her memory—the one in which the reviving man had pronounced Constance's name, and Constance had shown her triumph in her eyes.

As often happens in such cases, both George and Mamie had been less exhausted on the evening of the fatal day than they were for several days afterwards. It was long before Mamie made any reference again to the first word he had spoken with returning consciousness. She often, indeed, stood gazing across the river, towards the scene of the tragedy and beyond the tall trees in the direction of the house that was hidden behind them, and George knew what was in her thoughts better than he could tell what was in his own. He had learned soon enough that he owed a large share of gratitude for the preservation of his life to Mamie herself. The young doctor who had done so much had been to see him more than once, and had repeated to him that if he had been left, even with his head above water, but without the immediate assistance necessary in such cases, during two or three minutes more, he would in all likelihood never have breathed again. The presence of a boat on the spot, and, above all, Mamie's exhibition of an almost supernatural strength in getting George into the wherry, had really saved his life. Without her, the four men who had acted so promptly would have been helpless. Their own craft was adrift and empty, and they had been unable to right the cutter so as to make use of her, light as she was. The doctor did not fail to say the same thing to Mamie, complimenting her on her presence of mind and extraordinary energy in a way that brought the colour to her pale cheeks. George felt that a new tie bound him to his cousin.

It was, indeed, impossible that where there was already so much genuine affection on the one side, and so much devoted love on the other, such an accident should not increase both in a like proportion. Whether it were really true that Mamie had been the immediate means of saving George or not, the testimony was universally in favour of that opinion, and the girl herself was persuaded that without her help he would have perished. She had saved him at the moment of death, and she loved him ten times more passionately than before. As for him, he doubted his own power to reason in the matter. He had been fond of her before; he was devotedly attached to her now. His whole nature was full

of gratitude and trust where she was concerned, and his relations with Constance Fearing began to take the appearance of an infidelity to Mamie. If he asked himself whether he felt or could ever feel for his cousin what he had felt so strongly for Constance, the answer was plain enough. It was impossible. But if he put the matter differently he found a different response in his heart. If, thought he, the two young girls were drowning before his eyes, as John Bond and he had been drowning before theirs, and if it were only possible to save one, which should it be? In that imaginary moment that was so real from his recent experience, when he was swimming forward with all his might to reach the spot in time, would he have struck out to the right and saved Mamie, or would he have turned to the left and drawn Constance ashore? There was no hesitation. Mamie should have lived and Constance might have died, though he would have risked his own life a hundred times to help her after the first was safe, and though the thought of her death sent a sharp pain through his heart. Was he, then, in love with both? That was an impossibility, he thought—an absurdity that could never be a reality; the creation, perhaps, of some morbid story-maker, evolved without experience from the elaboration of imaginary circumstances.

Since he had entered upon this frame of mind he had grown very cautious and reticent. He was playing with fire on both sides. That Mamie loved him with all her heart he now no longer doubted; and as for Constance, now that he had not seen her for some time, and had found leisure to reflect upon her conduct, it seemed clear that the latter could not be explained upon any ordinary theory of friendship, and, if so, she also loved him in her own strange way. He wished it had been easier to decide between the two, if he must decide at all. If there was to be no decision, he should lose no time in leaving the neighbourhood. To stay where he was would be to play a contemptibly irresponsible part. He was disturbing Constance's peace of mind, and he was not sure that at any moment he might not do or say something that would make Mamie believe that he loved her. He owed too much to these two beings, about whom his strongest affections were centred; he could not and would not give either the one or the other a moment's pain.

Totty was also not without her apprehensions in the matter. When she had somewhat recovered from the impression of the accident, she began to think it very odd that George should have

been sitting alone with Constance under the trees on that Sunday afternoon. She remembered that he had disappeared mysteriously soon after luncheon, without saying anything of his intentions. She argued that he had certainly not met Constance by accident, and that if the meeting had been agreed upon the two must have met before. She knew that George had once loved the girl, and all she positively knew of the cause of the coldness between them was what she had learned from himself. She had undoubtedly refused him, and he had been very angry, but that did not prevent his offering himself again, and did not by any means exclude the possibility of his being accepted. Totty was worldly-wise, and she understood young women of Constance's type better than most of them understand themselves. They imagine that in refusing men they are temporarily, and by an act of their own volition, putting them back from the state of love to the state of devoted friendship, in order to discover whether they themselves are in earnest. Many men bear the treatment kindly, and reappear at the expected time with their second declaration, are accepted, happily married, and forgotten promptly by designing mothers. Occasionally a man appears who is like George Wood, who raves, storms, grows thin, and refuses to speak to the heartless little flirt who has wrecked his existence, until, on a summer's day, he is unexpectedly forced into her society again, when he finds that he loves her still, tells her so, and receives a kind answer, prompted by the fear of losing him altogether.

The prospect was not a pleasant one. If, at the present juncture, Constance were to succeed in winning George back, Totty was capable of being roused to great and revengeful wrath. Hitherto she had not even thought of such a catastrophe as probable, but the discovery that the two had been spending a quiet afternoon together under the trees strangely altered the face of the situation. If, however, George still felt anything for the girl, Totty had not failed to see that she also had gained something by the accident. It was a great point that Mamie should have saved George's life, and the longer Mrs. Trimm thought of it, the more sure she became that he had owed his salvation to the young girl alone, and that the four gentlemen who had appeared so opportunely had only been accessories to her action. George must be hard-hearted indeed if he were not grateful, and the natural way of showing his gratitude should be to fall in love without delay. But George was an inscrutable being, as was sufficiently shown by his secretly meeting Constance. Totty wondered whether she ought not to give him a

hint, to convey tactfully to him the information that Mamie was deeply in love, to let him know that he was welcome to marry her. She hesitated to do this, however, fearing lest George should take to flight. She knew better than anyone that he had been more attracted by the comfort, the quiet, and the luxury of her home than by Mamie, when he had consented to spend the summer under the roof; and though Mamie herself had now grown to be an attraction in his eyes, she did not believe that the girl had inspired in him anything like the sincere passion he had felt for Constance.

Meanwhile those who had been most nearly affected by the calamity were passing through one of those periods of life upon which men and women afterwards look back with amazement, wondering how they could have borne so much without breaking under the strain. Grace was beside herself with grief. After the first few days of passionate weeping she regained some command over her actions, but the deep-seated, unrelenting pain which no longer found vent in tears was harder to bear, inasmuch as it was more conscious of itself and of its own fearful proportions. For many days the miserable woman never left her room, sitting from morning till evening in the same attitude, dry-eyed and motionless, gazing at the place where her dead husband had lain; and in that same place she lay all night, sleepless, waiting for the dawn, looking for the first grey light at the window, listening for his breathing, in the mad hope that it had all been but a dream which would vanish before the morning sun. Her heart would not break, her strong, well-balanced intelligence would not give way, though she longed for death or madness to end her sufferings.

At first Constance was always with her, but before long she understood that the strong woman preferred to be alone. All that could be done was to insist upon her taking food at regular intervals and to pray that her state might soon change. Once or twice Constance urged her to leave the place and to allow herself to be taken to the city, to the seaside, abroad, anywhere away from everything that reminded her of the past. But Grace stared at her with coldly wondering eyes.

'It is all I have left—the memory,' she said, and relapsed into silence.

Constance consulted physicians without her sister's knowledge, but they said that there was nothing to be done, that such cases were rare but not unknown, that Mrs. Bond's great strength of constitution would survive the strain since it had resisted the first

shock. And so it proved in the end. For on a certain morning in September, when Constance was seated alone in a corner of the old-fashioned garden, she had been startled by the sudden appearance of a tall figure in black, and of a face which she hardly recognised as being her sister's. She had been accustomed to seeing her in the dimness of a darkened room, wrapped in loose garments, her smooth brown hair hanging down in straight plaits. She was dressed now with all the scrupulous care of appearance that was natural to her, with perfect simplicity as became her deep mourning, but also with perfect taste. But the correctness of her costume only served to show the changes that had taken place during the past weeks. She was thin almost to emaciation, her smooth young cheeks were hollow and absolutely colourless, her brown eyes were sunken and their depth was accentuated by the dark rings that surrounded them. But she was erect as she walked, and she held her head as proudly as ever. Her strength was not gone, for she moved easily and without effort. Anyone would have said, however, that, instead of being nearly two years younger than Constance, as she actually was, she must be several years older.

When Constance saw her she rose quickly with the first expression of joy that had escaped her lips for many a day.

'Thank God!' she exclaimed. 'At last!'

'At last,' Grace answered quietly. 'One thing only, Constance,' she continued after a pause. 'I will be myself again. But do not talk of going away, and never speak of what has happened.'

'I never will, dear,' answered the older girl.

There had been many inquiries made at the house by messengers from Mrs. Trimm, but neither she nor Mamie nor George had ventured to approach the place upon which such awful sorrow had descended. They had been surprised at not learning that the two sisters had left their country-seat, and had made all sorts of conjectures concerning their delay in going away, but they gradually became accustomed to the idea that Grace might prefer to stay where she was.

'It would kill me!' Totty exclaimed with much emphasis.

'I could not do it,' said Mamie, looking at George and feeling suddenly how hateful the sight of the river would have been to her if she had not seen his eyes open on that terrible day when he lay like dead before her.

'I would not, whether I could or not,' George said. And he on his part wondered what he would have felt, had Constance or

Mamie, or both, perished instead of John Bond. A slight shiver ran through him, and told him that he would have felt something he had never experienced before.

One morning when they were all at breakfast a note was brought to George in a handwriting he did not recognise, but which was oddly familiar from its resemblance to Constance's.

'Do see what it is!' exclaimed Totty, before he had time to ask permission to read it.

His face expressed nothing as he glanced over the few lines the note contained, folded it again, and put it into his pocket.

'Mrs. Bond wants me to go and see her,' he said, in explanation. 'I wonder why?'

'It is very natural,' Totty answered. 'She wants to thank you for what you did.'

'Very unnecessary, considering the unfortunate result,' observed George thoughtfully.

'Will you go to-day?' Mamie asked, in the hope that he would suggest taking her with him.

'Of course,' he answered shortly. As soon as breakfast was over he went to his work, without spending what he called his quarter of an hour's grace in the garden with his cousin.

George Wood was a nervous and sensitive man in spite of his strong organisation, and he felt a strong repugnance to revisiting the scene of the fatal accident. He had indeed been on the river several times since Bond had been drowned, and had taken Mamie with him, telling her that one ought to get over the first impressions at once, lest one should lose the power of getting over them at all. But to row into the very water in which John had died, and he himself had nearly lost his life, was as yet more than he cared to do when there was no definite object to be gained. Though the little wooded point of land was nearer to the house than the landing, he went to the latter without hesitation.

He was shocked at Grace's appearance when he met her in the great old drawing-room. Her face was very grave, almost solemn, in its immobility, and her eyes looked unnaturally large.

'I fear I have given you a great deal of trouble, Mr. Wood,' she said, as she laid her thin, cold fingers in his hand. He remembered that her grasp had formerly been warm and full of life.

'Nothing that you could ask of me would give me trouble,' George answered earnestly. He had an idea that she wanted him to do her some service, in some way connected with the accident, but he could not imagine what it might be.

'Thank you,' she said. He noticed that she continued to stand, and that she was apparently dressed for going out. 'That is one reason why I asked you to come. I have not been myself, and have seen no one until now. Let me thank you—as only I can—for your noble and gallant attempt to save my husband.'

Her voice did not tremble, nor did the glance of her deep eyes waver, as she spoke of the dead man, but George felt that he had never seen or dreamed of such grief as hers.

'I could not do less,' he said hoarsely, for he found it hard to speak at all.

'No man ever did more. No man could do more,' Grace said gravely. 'And now, will you do me a great service—a great kindness?'

'Anything,' George answered readily.

'It will be hard for you. It will be harder for me. Will you come with me to the place and tell me as well as you can how it all happened?'

George looked at her in astonishment. Her eyes were fixed on his face and her expression had not changed.

'It is the only kindness anyone can do for me,' she said simply; and then, without waiting for any further answer, she turned towards the door.

George walked by her side in silence. They left the house and took the direction of the wooded point, never exchanging a word as they went. From time to time George glanced at his companion's face, wondering inwardly what manner of woman she might be who was able to suffer as she evidently had suffered, and yet could, of her own accord, face such an explanation of events as she had asked him to give her. In less than ten minutes they had reached the spot. Grace stood a few seconds without speaking, her thin face fixed in its unchangeable look of pain, her arms hanging down, her hands clasped loosely together.

'Now tell me. Tell me everything. Do not be afraid—I am very strong.'

George collected his thoughts. He wished to make the story as short as possible, while omitting nothing that was of vital importance.

'I was rowing,' he said, 'and I saw what happened. The boat was lying to and drifting very slowly. Your husband put the helm up, and she began to turn. At that moment the squall came. He tried to let out the sail—that would have taken off the pressure—but it seemed as though he could not. The last I saw of him was just as the boat heeled over. He seemed to be

trying to get the sheet—the rope, you know—loose, so that it would run. Then the boat went over, and I thought he had merely fallen overboard upon the other side. I asked you if he could swim. When you cried out, I jumped over and swam as hard as I could. Not seeing him, I dived under. He seemed to be entangled in the ropes and the sail, and was struggling furiously. I tried to drag him back, but he could not get out, and caught me by the arm, so that I could not move either. I did my best, but my breath would not hold out, and I could not get my head from under. He was not moving then, though he held me still. That is the last I remember, his grip upon my arm. Then I took in the water, and it was all over.’

He ceased speaking and looked at Grace. She was, if possible, paler than before, but she had not changed her position, and she was gazing at the water. Many seconds elapsed, until George began to fear that she had fallen into a sort of trance. He waited a little longer and then spoke to her.

‘Mrs. Bond!’ She made no reply. ‘Are you ill?’ he asked. She turned her head slowly towards him.

‘No; I am not ill. Let us go back,’ she said.

They returned to the house as silently as they had come. Her step did not falter and her face did not change. When they reached the door, she stood still and put out her hand, evidently wishing him to leave her.

‘You were very brave,’ she said. ‘And you have been very kind to-day. I hope you will come and see me sometimes.’

George bowed his head silently and took leave of her. He had not the heart to ask for Constance, and, indeed, he preferred to be alone for a time. He had experienced a new and strange emotion, and his eyes had been opened concerning the ways of human suffering. If he had not seen and heard, he would never have believed that a woman capable of such calmness was in reality heartbroken. But it was impossible to look at Grace’s face and to hear the tones of her voice without understanding instantly that the whole fabric of her life was wrecked. As she had told her sister, she had nothing left but the memory, and she had been determined that it should be complete, that no detail should be wanting to the very end. It was a satisfaction to remember that his last words—insignificant enough—had been addressed to her. She had wanted to know what his last movement had been, his last struggle for life. She knew it all now, and she was satisfied, for there was nothing more to be known.

As he rowed himself slowly across the river, George could not

help remembering the Grace Fearing he remembered in old times and comparing her with the woman he had just left. The words she had spoken in praise of his courage were still in his ear with their ring of heartfelt gratitude and with the look that had accompanied them. There was something grand about her which he admired. She had never been afraid to show that she disliked him when she had feared that he might marry her sister. When Constance had at last determined upon her answer, it had been Grace who had conveyed it, with a frankness which he had once distrusted, but which he remembered and knew now to have been real. She had never done anything of which she was ashamed, and she had been able now to thank him from her heart, looking fearlessly into his eyes. She would have behaved otherwise if she had ever deceived him. She would have said too much or too little, or she might have felt bound to confess at such a moment that she had formerly done him a wrong. A strange woman she was, he thought, but a strong one and very honest. She had never hesitated in her life, and had never regretted anything she had done—it was written in her face even now. He did not understand why she wished to see him often, for he could have supposed that his mere presence must call up the most painful memories. But he determined that if she remained some time longer he would once or twice cross the river and spend an hour with her. The remembrance of to-day's interview would make all subsequent meetings seem pleasant by comparison.

The circumstances of the afternoon had wearied him, and he was glad to find himself again in the midst of more pleasant and familiar associations. In answer to Totty's inquiries as to how Grace looked and behaved during his visit, he said very little. She looked very ill, she behaved with great self-possession, and she had wished to know some details about the accident. More than that George would not say, and his imperturbable face did not betray that there was anything more to be said. In the evening he found himself alone with Mamie on the verandah, Totty having gone within, as usual, on pretence of writing letters. The weather was still pleasant, though it had grown much cooler, and Mamie had thrown a soft white shawl over her shoulders, of which George could see the outlines in the gloom.

'Tell me, what did she really do?' Mamie asked, after a long silence.

George hesitated a moment. He was willing to tell her many things which he would not have told her mother, for he felt that

she could understand them and sympathise with them when Totty would only pretend to do so.

'Why do you want to know?' he asked, by way of giving himself more time to think.

'Is it not natural? I should like to know how a woman acts when the man she loves is dead.'

'Poor thing!' said George. 'There is not much to tell, but I would not have it known—do you understand? She made me walk with her to the place where it happened and go over the whole story. She never said a word, though she looked like death. She suffers terribly—so terribly that there is something grand in it.'

'Poor Grace! I can understand. She wanted to know all there was to be known. It is very natural.'

'Is it? It seemed strange to me. Even I did not like to go near the place; and it was very hard to tell her all about it—how poor Bond gripped my arm, and then the grip after he was dead.'

He shuddered and was silent for a moment.

'I said it all as quickly and clearly as I could,' he added presently. 'She thanked me for telling her, and for what I had done to save her husband. She said she hoped I would come again sometimes, and then I left.'

'You did not see Constance, I suppose?'

'No. She did not appear. I fancy her sister told her not to interrupt us, and so she kept out of the way. It was horribly sad—the whole thing. I could not help thinking that if it had not been for you the poor creature would never have known how it happened. I should not have been alive to tell the tale.'

'Are you glad that you were not drowned?' Mamie asked in a rather constrained voice.

'For myself? I hardly know. I cannot tell whether I set much value on life or not. Sometimes it seems to be worth living, and sometimes I hardly care.'

'How can you say that, George?' exclaimed the young girl indignantly. 'You, so young and so successful?'

'Whether life is worth living or not—who knows? It has been said to depend on climate and the affections.'

'The climate is not bad here; and as for the affections——' Mamie broke off in a nervous laugh.

'No,' George said, as though answering an unspoken reproach. 'I do not mean that. I know that you are all very fond of me and very good to me. But look at poor John Bond. He always

seemed to you to be an uninteresting fellow, and I used to wonder why he found life worth living. I know now. He was loved—loved as I fancy very few men have ever been. If you could have seen that poor woman's face to-day, you would understand what I mean.'

'I can understand without having seen it,' said Mamie in a smothered voice.

'No,' said George, pursuing his train of thought, tactless and manlike. 'You cannot understand—nobody can who has not seen her. There is something grand, magnificent, queenly in a sorrow like that, and it shows what she felt for the man, and what he knew she felt. No wonder that he looked happy! Now I, if I had been drowned the other day—if you had not saved me—of course people would have been very sorry, but there would have been no grief like that.'

He was silent. Then a sharp, short sob broke the stillness, and as he turned his head he saw that Mamie had risen and was passing swiftly through the door into the drawing-room. He rose to his feet and then stood still, knowing that it was of no use to follow her.

'What a brute I am!' he thought as he sat down again.

Several minutes passed. He could hear the sound of subdued voices within, and then a door was opened and closed. A moment later Totty came out and looked about. She was dazzled by the light and could not see him. He rose and went forward.

'Here I am,' he said.

She laid her hand upon his arm and looked at his face as she spoke very gently.

'George dear—things cannot go on like this,' she said.

'You are quite right, Totty,' he answered. 'I will go away to-morrow.'

'Sit down,' said Totty. 'Have you got one of those cigars? Light it. I want to have a long talk with you.'

Totty Trimm had determined to bring matters to a crisis.

CHAPTER XXII.

GEORGE felt that his heart was beating faster as he prepared to hear what Totty had to say. He knew that the moment had come for making a decision of some sort, and he was annoyed that it should be thrust upon him, especially by Totty Trimm. He could not be sure of what she was about to say, but he supposed

that it was her intention to deliver him a lecture upon his conduct towards Mamie, and to request him to make it clear to the girl, either by words or by an immediate departure, that he could never love her and much less marry her, considering his relatively impecunious position. It struck him that many women would have spoken in a more severe tone of voice than his cousin used, but this he attributed to her native good humour as much as to her tact. He drew his chair nearer to hers, nearer than it had been to Mamie's, and prepared to listen.

'George, dear boy,' said Totty, 'this is a very delicate matter. I really hardly know how to begin, unless you will help me.' A little laugh, half shy, half affectionate, rippled pleasantly in the dusky air. Totty meant to show from the first that she was not angry.

'About Mamie?' George suggested.

'Yes,' Totty answered with a quick change to the intonation of sadness. 'About Mamie. I am very much troubled about her. Poor child! She is so unhappy—you do not know.'

'I am sincerely sorry,' said George gravely. 'I am very fond of her.'

'Yes, I know you are. If things had not been precisely as they are——' She paused as though asking his help.

'You would have been glad of it. I understand.' George thought that she was referring to his want of fortune, as she meant that he should think. She wanted to depress him a little, in order to surprise the more afterwards.

'No, George dear. You do not understand. I mean that if you loved her, instead of being merely fond of her, it would be easier to speak of it.'

'To tell me to go away?' he asked, in some perplexity.

'No, indeed! Do you think I am such a bad friend as that? You must not be so unkind. Do you think I would have begged you so hard to come and stay all summer with us, that I would have left you so often together——'

'You cannot mean that you wish me to marry her!' George exclaimed in great astonishment.

'It would make me very happy,' said Totty gently.

'I am amazed!' exclaimed George. 'I do not know what to say—it seems so strange!'

'Does it? It seems so natural to me. Mamie is always first in my mind—whatever can contribute to her happiness in any way—and especially in such a way as this——'

'And she?' George asked.

'She loves you, George—with all her heart.' Totty touched his hand softly. 'And she could not love a man whom we should be more glad to see her marry,' she added, putting into her voice all the friendly tenderness she could command.

George let his head sink on his breast. Totty held his hand a moment longer, gave it an infinitesimal squeeze, and then withdrew her own, sinking back into her chair with a little sigh as though she had unburdened her heart. For some seconds neither spoke again.

'Cousin Totty,' George said at last, 'I believe you are the best friend I have in the world. I can never thank you for all your disinterested kindness.'

Totty smiled sweetly in the dark, partly at the words he used and partly at the hopes she founded upon them.

'It would be strange if I were not,' she said. 'I have many reasons for not being your enemy, at all events. I have thought a great deal about you during the last year. Will you let me speak quite frankly?'

'You have every right to say what you think,' George answered gratefully. 'You have taken me in when I was in need of all the friendship and kindness you have given me. You have made me a home, you have given me back the power to work, which seemed gone; you have——'

'No, no, George; do not talk of such wretched things. There are hundreds of people who would be only too proud and delighted to have George Winton Wood spend a summer with them—yes, or marry their daughters. You do not seem to realise that—a man of your character, of your rising reputation—not to say celebrity—a man of your qualities is a match for any girl. But that is not what I meant to say. It is something much harder to express, something about which I have never talked to you, and never thought I should. Will you forgive me if I speak now? It is about Constance Fearing.'

George looked up quickly.

'Provided you say nothing unkind or unjust about her,' he answered without hesitation.

'I?' ejaculated Totty in surprise. 'Am I not so fond of her, that I wanted you to marry her? I cannot say more, I am sure. Constance is a noble-hearted girl, a little too sensitive perhaps, but good beyond expression. Yes, she is good. That is just the word. Scrupulous to a degree! She has the most finely balanced

conscience I have ever known. Dr. Drinkwater—you know, our dear rector in New York—says that there is no one who does more for the poor, or who takes a greater interest in the church, and that she consults him upon everything, upon every point of duty in her life—it is splendid, you know. I never knew such a girl—and then, so clever! A Lady Bountiful and a Countess Matilda in one! Only—no, I am not going to say anything against her, because there is simply nothing to be said—only I really do not believe that she is the wife for you, dear boy. I do not pretend to say why. There is some reason, some subtle, undefinable reason why you would not suit each other. I do not mean to say that she is vacillating or irresolute. On the contrary, her sensitive conscience is one of the great beauties of her character. But I have always noticed that people who are long in deciding anything irritate you. Is it not true? Of course I cannot understand you, George, but I sometimes feel what you think almost as soon as you. That is not exactly what I mean, but you understand. That is one reason. There are others no doubt. Do you know what I think? I believe that Constance Fearing ought to marry one of those splendid young clergymen one hears about, who devote their lives to doing good, and to the poor—and that kind of thing.'

'I dare say,' said George, as Totty paused. The idea was new to him, but somehow it seemed very just. 'At all events,' he added, 'she ought to marry a better man than I am.'

'Not better—as good in a different way,' suggested Totty. 'An especially good man, rather than an especially clever one.'

'I am not especially clever,' George answered. 'I have worked harder than most men and have succeeded sooner. That is all.'

'Of course it is your duty to be modest about yourself. We all have our opinions. Some people call that greatness—never mind. The principle is the same. Tell me—you admire her, and all that, but you do not honestly believe that you and she are suited to each other, do you?'

Totty managed her voice so well that she made the question seem natural, and not at all offensive. George considered his reply for a moment before he spoke.

'I think you are right,' he said. 'We are not suited to each other.'

Totty breathed more freely, for the moment had been a critical one.

'I was sure of it, though I used to wish it had been other-

wise. I used to hope that you would marry her, until I knew you both better—until I saw there was somebody else who was—well—in short, who loves you better. You do not mind my saying it.'

'I am sorry if it is true——'

'Why should you be sorry? Could anything be more natural? I should think that a man would be very glad and very happy to find that he is dearly loved by a thoroughly nice girl——'

'Yes, if——'

'No! I know what you are going to say. If he loves her. My dear George, it is of no use to deny it. You do love Mamie. Anyone can see it, though she would die rather than have me think that she believed it. I do not say it is a romantic passion and all that. It is not. You have outgrown that kind of thing, and you are far too sensible, besides. But I do say that you are devotedly attached to her, that you seek her society, that you show how much you like to be alone with her—a thousand things that we can all see.'

'All' referred to Totty herself, of course, but George was too much disturbed to notice the fact. He could find nothing to say, and Totty continued:

'Not that I blame you in the least. I ought to blame myself for bringing you together. I should if I were not so sure that it is the best thing for your happiness as well as for Mamie's. You two are made for each other—positively made for each other. Mamie is not beautiful, of course—if she were I would not give you a catalogue of her advantages. She is not rich——'

'You forget that I have only my profession,' said George rather sharply.

'But what a profession! Besides, if it came to that, we should always wish our daughter to live as she has been accustomed to live. That is not the question. She is not beautiful, and she is not rich; but—you cannot deny it, George—she has a charm of her own—a grace, a something that a man will never be tired of because he can never find out just what it is, nor just where it lies. That is quite true, is it not?'

'Dear Cousin Totty, I deny nothing——'

'No, of course not! You cannot deny that, at least—and then—do you know—you have the very same thing yourself, the something undefinable that a woman likes. Has no one ever told you that?'

'No, indeed!' exclaimed George, laughing a little in spite of himself.

'I am quite serious,' said Totty. 'Mamie and you are made for each other. There can be no doubt about it, any more than there can be about your loving each other, each in your own way.'

'If it were in the same way——'

'It is not so different. I was thinking of it only the other day. Suppose that several people were in danger at once—in that dreadful river, for instance—you would save her first.'

George glanced sharply at his cousin. The same idea had crossed his own mind.

'How do you know that?' he asked.

'Is it not true?'

'Yes—I suppose it is. But I cannot imagine how you guessed——'

'Do you think I am blind?' asked Totty, almost indignantly.

'Do you think Mamie does not know it as well as I do? After all these months of devotion! You must think me very dull. The only wonder is that you should not yet have told her so.'

George wondered why she took it for granted that he had not.

'What I should have to tell her would be very hard to say as it ought to be said,' he answered thoughtfully.

Totty's manner changed again, and she turned her head towards him, lowering her voice and speaking in a tone of sincere sympathy.

'Oh, I know how hard it must be!' she said. 'Most of all for you. To say, "I love you," and then to add, "I do not love you in the same way as I once loved another." But then, must one add that? Is it not self-evident? Ah no! There is no love like the first—indeed, there is not!'

Totty sighed deeply, as though the recollection of some long-buried fondness were still dear and sweet and painful.

'And yet, one does love,' she continued a little more cheerfully. 'One loves again, often more truly, if one knew it, and more sincerely than the first time. It is better so—the affection of later years is happier and brighter and more lasting than that other. And it is love, in the best sense of the word—believe me, it is.'

If there had been the least false note of insincerity in her voice, George would have detected it. But what Totty attempted to do, she did well, with a consummate appreciation of details and their value which would have deceived a keener man than

he. Moreover, he himself was in great doubt. He was really so strongly attracted by Mamie as to know that a feather's weight would turn the scale. But for the recollection of Constance he would have loved her long ago with a love in which there might have been more of real passion and less of illusion. Mamie was in many ways a more real personage in his appreciation than Constance. Totty had defined the difference between the two very cleverly by what she had said. The more he thought of it, the more ideal Constance seemed to become.

But there was another element at work in his judgment. He was obliged to confess that Totty was right in another of her facts. During the long months of the summer he had undoubtedly acted in a way to make ordinary people believe that he loved Mamie. He had more than once shown that he resented Totty's presence, and Totty had taken the hint and had gone away, with a readiness he only understood now. He had been very much spoiled by her, but had never supposed that she desired the marriage. It had been enough for him to show that he wished to talk to Mamie without interruption, and he had been immediately humoured, as he was humoured in everything in that charming establishment. Totty, however—and, of course, poor Mamie herself—had put an especial construction upon all his slightest words and gestures. To use the language of the world, he had compromised the girl, and had made her believe that he was to some extent in love with her, which was infinitely worse. It was very kind of Totty to be so tactful and diplomatic. Honest Sherry Trimm would have asked him his intentions in two words, and would have required an answer in one—a mode of procedure which would have been far less agreeable.

'You owe her something, George,' Totty said, after a long pause. 'She saved your life. You must not break her heart—it would be a poor return.'

'God forbid! Totty, do you think seriously that I have acted in a way to make Mamie believe I love her?'

'I am sure you have—she knew it long ago. You need hardly tell her, she is so sure of it.'

'I am very glad,' George answered. 'What will Cousin Sherry say to this?'

'Oh, George! How can you ask? You know how fond he is of you; he will be as glad as I if——'

'There shall be no "ifs,"' George interrupted. 'I will ask Mamie to-morrow.'

He had made up his mind, for he detested uncertainties of all sorts. He felt that, however he might compare Mamie with Constance, he was on the verge of some sort of passion for the former, whereas the latter represented something never to be realised, something which, even if offered him now, he could not accept without misgivings and doubts. Since he had made Mamie believe that he loved her, no matter how unintentionally the result had been produced, and since he felt that he could love her in return, and be faithful to her, and, lastly, since her father and mother believed that the happiness of her life depended upon him, it seemed most honourable to disappoint no one; and if it turned out that he was making a sacrifice he would keep it to himself throughout his natural life.

Totty held her breath for a moment after he had made his statement, fearing lest she should utter some involuntary exclamation of delight, too great even for the occasion. Then she rose and came to his side, laid her hands upon his shoulders, and touched his dark forehead with her salmon-coloured lips. George remembered that a humming-bird had once brushed his face with its wings, and the one sensation reminded him of the other.

'God bless you, my dear son!' said Totty in accents that would have carried the conviction of sincerity to an angel's heart.

George pressed her hand warmly, but with an odd feeling that the action was not spontaneous. He felt as though he were doing something that was expected of him, and was doing it as well as he could, without enthusiasm. He looked up in the gloom and felt that something warm fell upon his face.

'Why, Cousin Totty, you are crying,' he exclaimed.

'Happy tears,' answered Mrs. Sherrington Trimm in a voice trembling with emotion. Then she turned and swiftly entered the drawing-room, leaving him alone in the verandah in the darkness.

'So the die is cast, and I am to marry Mamie,' he thought as soon as she was gone.

In the first moments it was hard to realise that he had bound himself by an engagement from which he could not draw back, and that so soon after he had broken with Constance Fearing. Five months had not gone by since the first of May, since he had believed that his life was ruined and his heart broken. What had there been in his love for Constance which had made it unreal from first to last—real only in the moment of disappointment? He found no answer to the question, and he thought of Mamie,

his future wife. Yes, Totty was right. So far as it was possible to judge they were suited to each other in all respects except in his own lack of fortune. 'Suited' was the very word. He would never feel what he had felt for the other, the tenderness, the devotion, the dependence on her words for his daily happiness—he might own it now, the sweet fear of hurting her or offending her, which he had only half understood. Constance had dominated him during their intercourse, and until he had seen her real weakness. With Mamie it would be different. She clung to him, not he to her. She looked up to him as a superior, he could never worship her as an idol. He was to occupy the shrine henceforth, and he was to play the god and smile upon her when she offered incense. There could not be two images in two shrines, smiling and burning perfumes at each other. George smiled at the idea. But there was to be something else, something he had only lately begun to know. He was to be devotedly loved by someone, tenderly thought of, tenderly treated by one who now, at least, held the first place in his heart. That was very different from what he had hitherto received—the perpetual denial of love, the repeated assurances of friendship. He thought of that wonderful expression which he had seen two or three times on Mamie's face, and he was happy. There was nothing he would not do, nothing he would not sacrifice for the sake of receiving such love as that.

He slept peacefully through the night, undisturbed by visions of future trouble or dreams of coming disappointment. Nor had his mood changed when he awoke in the morning and gazed through the open windows at the trees beyond the river, where Constance's house was hidden. Would Constance be sorry to hear the news? Probably not. She would meet him with renewed offers of eternal friendship, and would in all probability come to the wedding. She had never felt anything for him. His lip curled scornfully as he turned away.

Early in the morning Totty entered her daughter's room. There was nothing extraordinary in the visit, and Mamie, who was doing her hair, did not look round, though she greeted her mother with a word of welcome. Totty kissed her with unwonted tenderness, even considering that she was usually demonstrative in her affections.

'Dear child,' she said, 'I just came in to see how you had slept. You need not go away,' she added, addressing the maid. 'You are a little pale, Mamie. But then you always are, and it

is becoming to you. What shall you wear to-day? It is very warm again—you might put on white, almost.'

'Conny Fearing always wears white,' Mamie answered.

'Why, she is in mourning of course,' said Mrs. Trimm with some solemnity.

'Is she? For her brother-in-law? Well, she always did, which is the same thing, exactly. She had on a white frock on the day of the accident. I can see her now!'

'Oh, then by all means wear something else,' said Totty with alacrity. 'You might try that striped flannel costume—or the skirt with a blouse, you know. That is new.'

'No,' said Mamie with great decision. 'I do not believe it is warm at all, and I mean to wear my blue serge.'

'Well,' answered Mrs. Trimm, 'perhaps it is the most becoming thing you have.'

'Positively, mamma, I have not a thing to wear!' exclaimed Mamie, by sheer force of habit.

'I am sure I have not,' answered her mother with a laugh.

'Oh, you mamma! You have lots of things.'

Totty did not go away until she had assured herself that Mamie was at her best. She knew that it would have been folly to give the girl any warning of what was about to take place, and she was aware that Mamie's taste in dress was even better than her own; but she had been unable to resist the desire to see her and to go over in her own heart the circumstances of her triumph. She knew also that Mamie would never forgive her if she should discover that her mother had known of George's intention before George had communicated it to herself, but it seemed very hard to be obliged to wait even a few hours before showing her intense satisfaction at the result of her diplomacy.

During breakfast she was unusually cheerful and talkative, whereas George was exceptionally silent and spoke with an evident effort. Mamie herself had to some extent recovered her spirits, though she was very much ashamed of having made such an exhibition of her feelings on the previous evening. She offered a lame explanation, saying that she had felt suddenly cold, and had run up to her room to get something warmer to put on; seeing it was so late, she had not thought it worth while to come down again. Then she changed the subject as quickly as she could, and was admirably seconded by her mother in her efforts to make conversation. George's face betrayed nothing. It was impossible to say whether he believed her story or not.

'I suppose you are going to work all the morning,' observed Mrs. Trimm as they rose from the table.

'I am not sure,' George answered, looking steadily at her for a second. 'At all events, I will have a turn in the garden before I set to. Will you come, Mamie?' he asked, turning to his cousin.

For some minutes they walked away from the house in silence. George was embarrassed and had not made up his mind what he should say. He did not look at his cousin's face, but as he glanced down before him he was conscious of her graceful movement at his side. Perfect motion had always had an especial charm for him, and at the present moment he was glad to be charmed. Presently they found themselves in a shady place beneath certain old trees, out of sight of the garden. George stopped suddenly, and Mamie, stopping also, looked at him in some little surprise.

'Mamie,' he said, in the best voice he could find, 'do you love me?'

'Better than anything in the world,' answered the young girl. Her lips grew slowly white, and there was a startled look in her fearless grey eyes.

'You saved my life. Will you take it—and keep it?'

He looked to her for an answer. A supreme joy came into her face, then shivered like a broken mirror under a blow, and gave way to an agonised fear.

'Oh, do not laugh at me!' she cried, in broken and beseeching tones.

'Laugh at you, dear? God forbid! I am asking you to be my wife.'

'Oh no! It is not true—you do not love me—it never can be true!' But, as she spoke, the day of happiness dawned again in her eyes—as a summer sun rising through a sweet shower of raindrops—and broke and flooded all her face with gladness.

'I love you, and it is quite true,' he answered.

The girl had for months concealed the great passion of her life as well as she could; she had borne, with all the patience she could command, the daily bitter disappointment of finding him always the same towards her; she had suffered much and had hidden her sufferings bravely, but the sudden happiness was more than she could control. As he held her in his arms, he felt her weight suddenly as though she had fallen, and he saw her eyelids droop and her long, straight lips part slowly over her gleaming

teeth. She was not beautiful, and he knew it as he looked at her white, unconscious face. But she loved him as he had never been loved before, and in that moment he loved her also. Supporting her with one arm, he held up her head with his other hand and kissed her again and again, with a passion he had never felt. Very slowly the colour returned to her lips, and then her eyes opened. There was no surprise in them, for she was hardly conscious that she had fainted.

'Have I been long so?' she asked faintly as the look of life and joy came back.

'Only a moment, darling,' he answered.

'And it is to be so for ever! Oh, it is too much, too good, too great. How can I believe so much in one day?'

It was long before they turned back again towards the house. The sun rose higher and higher, and the winnowed light fell upon them through the leaves reddened by the autumn colours that were already spreading over the woods, from tree to tree, from branch to branch, from leaf to leaf, like one long sunset lasting many days. But they sat side by side, not heeding the climbing sun nor the march of the noiseless hours. Their soft voices mingled lovingly with each other and with the murmur of the scarcely stirring breeze. Very reluctantly they rose at last to return, their arms twined about each other until they saw the gables of the house rising above them out of the rich mass of red, and orange, and yellow, and brown, and green that crowned the maples, the oaks, and the sycamores. One last long kiss under the shade, and they were out upon the hard brown earth of the drive, in sight of the windows, walking civilly side by side with the distance of half a pace between them. Totty, the discreet, had watched for them until she had caught a glimpse of their figures through the shrubbery, and had then retired within to await the joyful news.

Mamie disappeared as soon as they entered the house, glad to be alone if she could not be with the man she loved. But George went straight to her mother in the little morning-room where she generally sat. She looked up from her writing as though she had been long absorbed in it, then suddenly smiled and held out her hand. George pressed it with more sincerity than he had been able to find for the same demonstration of friendliness on the previous evening.

'I am very glad I took your advice,' he said. 'I am a very happy man. Mamie has accepted me.'

'Has she taken the whole morning to make up her mind about so simple a matter?' asked Totty archly.

'Well, not all the morning,' George answered. 'We had one or two ideas to exchange afterwards. Totty—no, I cannot call my mother-in-law Totty, it is too absurd! Cousin Charlotte—will that do? Very well, Cousin Charlotte, you must telegraph for Sherry's—I beg his pardon, for Mr. Trimm's—consent. Where is he?'

'Here—see for yourself,' said Totty, holding up to his eyes a sheet of paper on which was written a short cable:

'Trimm, Carlsbad, Bohemia. Mamie engaged George Wood. Wire consent. Totty.'

'You see how sure I was of her. I wrote this while you were out there. It is true you gave me time.'

'Sure of her, and of your husband?' said George, surprised by the form of the message.

'Oh, I have no doubts about him,' answered Mrs. Trimm with a light laugh. 'He thinks you are perfection, you know.'

The reply came late that night, short, sharp, and business-like:

'Fix wedding-day. Returning. Sherry.'

It was read by Totty with a sort of delirious scream of triumph, the first genuine expression she had permitted herself since her efforts had been crowned with success.

'It is too good to be believed,' said Mamie aloud, as she laid her head on the pillow.

'I would never have believed it,' said George thoughtfully, as he turned from his open window, where he had been standing an hour.

(To be continued.)

'King Henry the Eighth' on the Stage.

WE are not called upon to answer the much-debated question, 'Who wrote "Henry the Eighth"?' The first Folio assigns it to Shakespeare, and as Shakespeare's it has always been acted. No doubt Mr. Irving will adhere to tradition in this respect, though he might with tolerable safety give Fletcher's name a place on the playbill. It is not likely, at any rate, that he will be so scrupulously abreast of the age as to omit Shakespeare's name altogether, and assign the play to Fletcher and Massinger. The question of date, on the other hand, must be faced by the stage historian. Was it the play we know or another that was being acted at the Globe on June 29, 1613, when the thatch caught fire and the theatre was burnt to the ground? To us it seems overwhelmingly probable that it was, if not 'Henry the Eighth' as we now have it, at least an earlier version of the same piece. It certainly contained a scene in which Henry 'made a mask at the Cardinal Wolsey's house;' and it was the discharge of the cannon which (as in the extant play) announced the maskers that set the building on fire. We know from a doggerel 'sonnett' on the event that Burbage, Heminges, and Condell were engaged in this performance; and if we are right in assuming the play to have been the Shakespearean one, Burbage no doubt was the original Wolsey, for a tolerably authentic tradition states that Lowin was the original Henry. These traditions and probabilities constitute the whole stage-history of the play before the Restoration.

On December 10, 1663, Mr. Pepys, calling at Wotton's, his shoemaker's, heard of 'a rare play to be acted this week of Sir William Davenant's: the story of Henry the Eighth with all his wives.' Mr. Wotton's theatrical gossip was not very accurate, for the play was not Davenant's, although he may have 'amended' it, and the King did not appear as a sixteenth-century Brigham Young, with a train of spouses. Pepys saw the 'so much cried up' play on January 1, 1664, and was grievously disappointed,

declaring it to be 'so simple a thing, made up of a great many patches, that, besides the shows and processions in it, there is nothing in the world good or well done.' The production was unusually elaborate. Downes, the prompter, notes in his '*Roscius Anglicanus*' that it was 'all new cloathed in proper habits: the King's was new,¹ and all the Lords, the Cardinals, the Bishops, the Doctors, Proctors, Lawyers, Tipstaves.' Betterton played Henry, and was instructed in the traditions of the part by his manager, Davenant, who had them from 'old Mr. *Lowen*, that had his instructions from Mr. *Shakespear* himself.' In the part of Wolsey, Betterton's rival, Harris, according to Downes, was 'little inferior' to him, acting 'with such just State, Port, and Mein, that I dare affirm none hitherto has Equalled him.' Our only portrait of Harris represents him in this character. The print is one of the treasures of the Pepysian Library in Magdalene College, Cambridge. Queen Katharine was played by Mrs. Betterton, and the Duke of Buckingham, an excellent acting part, which great actors have not disdained, was entrusted to a tall and handsome young player named William Smith, who afterwards rose to great eminence. Cave Underhill, a heavy, lumbering low comedian, played Bishop Gardiner, perhaps in accordance with an old tradition that the character should be treated as a comic one. This was probably done with a view to that scene between the two bishops, the time-honoured 'business' of which Dr. Johnson's friend, Tom Davies, thus describes: 'The King obliges Gardiner to embrace Cranmer twice. The coldness of the latter (? former), who could not conceal his hatred, at the first embrace causes a smothered laugh in the spectators; but when, at the King's command, he is obliged to be more in earnest, his apparently assumed alacrity raises a general burst of laughter and much loud clapping.'

In spite of Mr. Pepys' disapproval, the 1663 production was a great success, and 'continu'd Acting 15 Days together with general Applause.' Henry was a favourite part of Betterton's to the end of his long career. We find him playing it nearly half a century after this—at the Haymarket, February 15, 1707—with the great Mrs. Barry as the Queen, Barton Booth as Buckingham, and 'Jack Verbruggen, that rough diamond,' as Anthony Aston

¹ It is worthy of note, by the way, that Henry the Eighth and Richard the Third are the only characters in the whole Elizabethan drama who seem throughout the history of the stage to have been dressed with some approach to historical correctness. Their personal appearance, no doubt, had impressed itself so strongly on their contemporaries as to have passed into tradition.

calls him, for his Wolsey. No doubt the play owed some of its popularity to the 'shows and processions' to which Pepys specially alludes. Mention is also made of them in 'The Rehearsal,' when Bayes tells his resuscitated dead men (Act ii. sc. 5) that they 'dance worse than the Angels in "Harry the Eighth," or the fat Spirits in "The Tempest," I gad.'

In the next period we find Booth promoted from Buckingham to the King, Colley Cibber playing Wolsey, Wilks Buckingham, and Mrs. Porter the Queen. All of these actors were much admired, especially Booth, whose Henry was one of his great parts. Theophilus Cibber, in his *Life of Barton Booth, Esq.*, says that though he gave full scope to the humour, he never dropped the dignity, of the King. 'He maintained the Monarch. *Hans Holbein* never gave a higher picture of him than did the Actor in his Representation.' Davies, too, tells us that Booth's dignity and grace were inimitable. 'He walked,' says honest Tom, 'with the ease of a gentleman and the dignity of a monarch.' At the end of the Trial scene, after the Queen's exit, we are told that his utterance of the four words, 'Go thy ways, Kate,' was so happy in emphasis that it always won a burst of applause. In the great scene of the Cardinal's disgrace, Davies gives us an interesting account of Booth's method of speaking the words, 'And then to breakfast—with what appetite you may'—the more interesting as it was no doubt the tradition handed to Booth by Betterton, as received by him through Lowin and Davenant 'from Mr. Shakespear himself.' Booth spoke the first four words in a quiet ordinary tone, reserving his vehement anger for the words, 'with what appetite you may.' Davies says that 'the tremendous look which Booth put on, with his rapid and vehement expression, fully corresponded with the design of the author,' which, he thinks, is manifest in the Cardinal's next speech, 'What sudden anger's this?'

Colley Cibber was well received in Wolsey, and seems to have entertained a very complacent opinion of his own acting of the part; but we can scarcely believe that Colley was capable of presenting the dignity and swelling port of the proud Churchman. In scenes where caution, cunning, or statesmanship was requisite he was no doubt at home; but in grief, anger, tenderness, he must have been deficient. Davies, whose theatrical training makes him record precisely the things we want to know regarding the actors whom he had seen, relates that in the speech, 'This candle burns not clear, 'tis I must snuff it, Then out it goes,'

Cibber imitated with his forefinger and thumb the extinguishing of a candle with a pair of snuffers. This is probably not a passage in which it is advisable to suit the action to the word. Charles Young kept his arms folded and slurred the metaphor completely; but John Kemble, says Genest, though he did not snuff the candle like Colley Cibber, 'yet seemed to smell a stink,' or, to use an expressive Scotticism, 'to feel a smell.' How will Mr. Irving read the lines?

In the small part of Buckingham the 'incomparable Wilks,' as Davies terms him, gained great glory. In the first scene his resentment against Wolsey broke out with an 'impetuosity resembling hasty sparks of fire; his action was vehement, and his motion quick and disturbed.' When condemned to death his demeanour was gentle and pathetic, and his grief manly, resigned, and temperate. Nor was Mrs. Porter less admirable in Queen Katharine, playing with a dignity and grace that had no equal till Mrs. Siddons made the part her own. In the Trial scene, we are told, her kneeling to the King was a highly affecting picture of majesty in distress: 'the suppression of her tears, when she reproached the Cardinal, bespoke the tumultuous conflict in her mind before she burst into that manifestation of indignity she felt in being obliged to answer so unworthy an interrogator.' Davies also writes enthusiastically of her death-scene—her grace and dignity of gesture and her heart-touching tenderness. Ben Johnson, a comedian whom Lloyd praises highly in his poem of 'The Actor,' played Gardiner with suitable decorum, being much too thorough an artist to introduce any buffoonery. The other parts, too, were so well filled that Steele, while manager, being asked by a nobleman how the King had liked the play when it was acted before him at Hampton Court, replied, 'So terribly well, my Lord, that I was afraid I should have lost all my actors! For I was not sure the King would not keep them to fill the posts at Court that he saw them so fit for in the play!' At the time of the coronation of George II., the attractions of the play were heightened by a fresh infusion of pageantry. 'The Menagers,' said Cibber, addressing the Court of Chancery in his suit against Steele, 'have invented and adorned a Spectacle that for Forty Days together has brought more Money to the House than the best Play that ever was writ. The Spectacle I mean, Sir, is that of the Coronation-Ceremony of Anna Bullen.' This is one of a hundred proofs that the theorists who denounce pageantry as a novel abuse of the modern stage do so in ignorance of historical

fact. We are no fonder of pageantry than were our forefathers—the only difference is that our pageants are more artistic.

During Booth's last illness, Harper, recommended probably by his personal likeness to the corpulent monarch, played Henry, and no doubt played him very badly; while John and William Mills must have been very inefficient successors to Cibber and Wilks as Wolsey and Buckingham. We know that Quin, the follower of Booth, was a good Henry, imitating his great predecessor as closely as he could; but we know little of the Wolsey of the young sailor-actor, Boheme, the Buckingham of Ryan, or the Queen of Mrs. Parker.

Now comes a long period during which Garrick's personal unfitness for either of the leading parts consigned the play to obscurity. It was occasionally produced, indeed, but never with special success. One or two eminent actors played Wolsey; but the part of the King had by this time fallen into disrepute. In 1744 Lacy Ryan played the Cardinal, Quin being the King, and Mrs. Pritchard the Queen—not one of this great actress's best characters. In 1752 Mossop was fairly successful as Wolsey, but he lacked dignity; and the same defect marred the performance of Henderson, who essayed the part in 1780. Bensley, who lives chiefly in Charles Lamb's magnificent eulogium, played Wolsey in 1772, with the lovely Mrs. Hartley as the Queen, and the facetious Ned Shuter as Gardiner; while West Digges, who was too bombastic, and Pope, who was too heavy, complete the list of Cardinals.

To Bensley belongs the distinction of having played Wolsey at Drury Lane when Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance as Queen Katharine—a character which, it will be remembered, was specially commended to her by Dr. Johnson. 'Madam,' he said, 'whenever you perform it, I will once more hobble to the theatre myself.' When the day came, alas! (November 25, 1788) the brave old man had been four years in Westminster Abbey. On this occasion John Palmer, 'Plausible Jack,' the original Joseph Surface, played the King; Wroughton was the Buckingham; 'Dicky' Suett, whom Lamb called 'the Robin Goodfellow of the stage,' probably buffooned Gardiner; and John Kemble, whose Cardinal was afterwards one of his great characters, combined the small parts of Cromwell and Griffith. In the same season, during Bensley's illness, Kemble took the part of Wolsey, but it was, as he stated to Boaden, but a *raw* performance, compared with that which he gave when his own

alteration of the play was acted at Covent Garden nearly twenty years later. Of Kemble's Wolsey there is little detailed description available, but Mrs. Siddons's performance of Queen Katharine has been so minutely described that we could follow her, were it necessary, through nearly every sentence of the character.

Her first great effect was made in the speech to the treacherous servant of the Duke of Buckingham who is betraying his master. According to Professor Bell, she bent on the traitor a very penetrating look, then, gazing very steadfastly and seriously in his face, spoke the lines :

If I know you well,

You were the Duke's Surveyor, and lost your office

On the complaint o' the tenants :

then changed her tone to one of severe remonstrance :

take good heed

You charge not in your spleen a noble person

And spoil your nobler soul : I say, take heed.

The Professor notes : 'Grand swell on "*And spoil your nobler soul.*" "I say, *take heed,*" very emphatic.' James Ballantyne, who published some excellent criticisms of Mrs. Siddons, writes that 'the insensibility of brutal apathy, or demoniac determination of evil, could alone have remained unalarmed and unchanged before the still, but tremendous force of her voice and eye as she uttered these lines.' This eulogy receives strong confirmation in an anecdote, related by Campbell, of an actor who once played the Surveyor to Mrs. Siddons's Katharine. A fellow-performer met him as he came off the stage 'perspiring with agitation.' 'What is the matter?' asked his comrade. 'The matter!' quoth the other. 'That woman plays as if the thing were in earnest. She looked on me so through and through with her black eyes, that I would not for the world meet her on the stage again.'

In the Trial scene Mrs. Siddons used an arrangement of the stage which Davies strongly condemns. The oldest stage direction, which probably Betterton and Booth adopted, seats the Queen at some distance from the King when the scene opens. When her name is called by the Crier, she rises to her feet. The more modern arrangement makes her come into court when her name is called—a less dignified treatment of the Queen, whom we can scarcely suppose to be waiting outside till called like a common culprit. Her opening speech, when kneeling to the

King, Professor Bell describes as 'a most sweet and gracious prelude, yet no departure from her dignity ;' but her great effect was in the words :

Lord Cardinal,
To you I speak !

With the words 'Lord Cardinal' the Queen breaks in on a speech of Cardinal Campeius. He, imagining that the words are addressed to him, comes forward as if to answer ; but the Queen first waves him back impatiently, then, recollecting herself, makes him 'a sweet bow of apology, and then hurls at Wolsey, 'in a voice of thunder,' the words, 'To *you* I speak!' Ballantyne says : 'Those who have seen it will never forget it ; but to those who have not, we feel it impossible to describe the majestic self-correction of the petulance and vexation, which, in her perturbed state of mind, she feels at the misapprehension of Campeius, and the intelligent expression of countenance and gracious dignity of gesture with which she intimates to him his mistake, and dismisses him again to his seat ; and no language can possibly convey a picture of her immediate re-assumption of the fulness of majesty glowing with scorn, contempt, anger, and the terrific pride of innocence when she turns round to Wolsey and exclaims, "To **YOU** I speak!" Her form seems to expand, and her eye to burn with a fire beyond human.' Professor Bell notes that, in uttering these words, she stood 'turned and looking *from* Wolsey, with her hand pointing back to him'—in fact, exactly as she is represented in Harlowe's picture, which illustrates this very passage.

Of her death-scene, which Ballantyne 'did not hesitate to believe the most entirely faultless specimen of the art that any age ever witnessed,' space forbids us to say much. One characteristic of her conception must, however, be mentioned. She was not contented with showing that monotonous languor which so commonly does duty for mortal illness on the stage. She 'displayed through her feeble and falling frame, and death-stricken expression of features, that morbid fretfulness of look, that restless desire of changing place and position which frequently attends our last decay. With impatient solicitude she sought relief from the irritability of illness by the often shifting her situation in her chair ; having the pillows, on which she reposed her head, every now and then removed and adjusted ; bending forward and sustaining herself while speaking by the pressure of her hands

upon her knees, and playing, during discourse, amongst her drapery with restless and uneasy fingers.' It is not difficult to believe that after her final exit the audience sat awed and silent for a short space before their feelings found vent in thunders of applause; nor is it unintelligible that, in presence of such a surpassing manifestation of genius, even her great brother's playing of Wolsey should have found no elaborate chronicler. He is said to have founded his representation of the Cardinal somewhat on West Digges; and he was no doubt most successful in the earlier acts, where dignity and impressiveness are the chief necessity.

Edmund Kean, on the other hand, got his great effects in the scene of the Cardinal's humiliation and fall. Specially fine was his speaking of the lines :

Go, get thee from me, Cromwell ;
I am a poor fallen man, unworthy now
To be thy lord and master,

and his rendering of the last words : ' Had I but served my God,' &c. Kean, however, did not play Wolsey until 1822, when he was past his zenith, and never made it one of his great characters. Charles Mayne Young was a good, if not a very inspired Cardinal; and Macready, who first played the part in 1823, made a considerable success in the character. He, like Kean, found his greatest effects in the more emotional and passionate passages. One of the most amusing anecdotes of Macready's petulance of temper relates to a revival of 'Henry the Eighth,' under the management of Maddox, at the Princess's. The part of Cardinal Campeius was assigned to a brother of Mr. George Augustus Sala, whose stage name was Wynn, for whom Macready had an inveterate dislike. The tragedian had implored the manager to see that Campeius was furnished with a costume which should not seem entirely ridiculous beside the splendid robes he himself wore as Wolsey; but Maddox, of course, disregarded the injunction. 'At the dress rehearsal,' says Mr. Edmund Yates, 'Macready, enthroned in a chair of state, had the various characters to pass before him; he bore all calmly until, clad in scarlet robes bordered by silver tissue-paper and wearing an enormous red hat, Wynn approached. Then, clutching both arms of his chair, and closing his eyes, the great tragedian gasped out, "Mother Shipton, by God!"'

During the present half-century the chief English representatives of the Queen have been Mrs. Charles Kean, Mrs. Warner, and Miss Glyn, while the Cardinal has been played by Charles Kean and

Samuel Phelps. Kean's production of 'Henry the Eighth' at the Princess's Theatre in 1855 was one of his elaborately upholstered revivals which perhaps did less violence to an historical story such as this than to a play of less settled period and place. It was a great success, owing chiefly to Mrs. Kean's admirable acting of the Queen. Kean himself played the Cardinal in a more familiar tone than had been customary, and seems to have taken pains to indicate that Wolsey betrayed in his manners his plebeian descent. That he succeeded in this design seems quite certain, for the *Times* critic, in a highly laudatory notice of the play, felicitates Kean on the cleverness with which he shows the great Cardinal as a 'smug ecclesiastic,' and 'ready to take offence with all the susceptibility of a *parvenu*.' 'The look which he darts at Campeggio (Campeius), when the latter would walk before him, has a sort of "who the d—— are you?" about it that is inimitably consequential.' We may be quite sure that Mr. Irving will take a somewhat loftier view of the famous Churchman. Mr. Walter Lacy played the King in this revival; John Ryder was the Buckingham, and the late Miss Heath (Mrs. Wilson Barrett) played Anne Boleyn.

With Samuel Phelps, Mrs. Warner, Miss Glyn, and Miss Atkinson, at different times, played Queen Katharine, all of them successfully. Phelps himself found in the Cardinal one of his best parts. Professor Morley, writing in 1865, says:—'His movements are perfect in ease and in the quiet self-possession of a man who always surely steals towards the end he seeks;' and of the Cardinal's fall he writes:—'There is a pathos in the quietness with which the old man stands at bay amid the mocking courtiers; a dignity of pathos in his pointing of the moral of his life at Court.' It was while playing this character that Phelps finally broke down, at the Aquarium Theatre, on March 1, 1878. He was speaking the lines,

O Cromwell, Cromwell!
Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal
I serv'd my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

He had in the earlier part of this speech introduced some incongruous words, but when he reached these lines 'he gathered himself up with tremendous energy, as was his wont, and, almost on tip-toe for one more triumph, gave them as far as "zeal" with all his usual grandeur and pathos; but after muttering a word or two more, he

fell on the shoulder of his secretary [Mr. Norman Forbes], and his career was closed.' One of the best extant portraits of Phelps, by Mr. Forbes Robertson, represents him in the character of Wolsey. It is now in the Garrick Club.

On one occasion—it was for the benefit of poor Mrs. Warner, who had fallen on evil days—Phelps had Charlotte Cushman for his Queen Katharine. The famous American actress was perhaps the most striking representative of the character since Mrs. Siddons, and it is interesting to note how she got her great effect in the Trial scene. The two Cardinals, Wolsey and Campeius, have just spoken, advocating immediate trial. 'Miss Cushman,' says her biographer, 'representing Katharine as looking upon Wolsey as her enemy, listened to his speech with a half contemptuous sneer, but to the words of Campeius she paid profound and deferential attention. At their conclusion she drew herself up to her extreme height and, swinging round so as to face Wolsey, with flashing eye, extended arm, a grandeur of gesture befitting one who was

A queen certain
The daughter of a king,

and in a voice whose every tone was full of the majesty of command, addressed him in the words, "Lord Cardinal, to you I speak!" with such startling effect and vivid emphasis as to completely electrify her audience.' This reading, if less ingenious, is perhaps more strictly in accordance with the text than Mrs. Siddons's treatment of the situation; yet Phelps, a sound and judicious stage-manager, seems to have preferred the latter. Which is in store for us at the Lyceum?

ROBERT W. LOWE.
WILLIAM ARCHER.

The 'Donna' in 1891.

I. BY THE AUTHOR OF 'CHARLES LOWDER.'

'THE Sisters' pudden board' is a new name given to the 'Donna' by her customers, and describes her much better than her finer name. Old readers of LONGMAN'S are well acquainted with the 'Donna,' but every year we need to make fresh friends for the food-truck from which, under London Bridge, hot nourishing food is daily sold at half cost to *unemployed* labourers. The other half has, for seven years, been provided by the constant kindness of readers of this MAGAZINE; but, this year, our funds are very low, and we greatly need new subscribers. One chief feature of this street restaurant is, that the food is always dispensed by a Sister, or lady visitor; and, having several times filled this latter post, I speak from personal knowledge, and careful collection of facts. The stand is more than a mile from the Sisters' restaurant in Dock Street, where the food is cooked, and the knowledge that a lady walks this distance in all weathers, and then stands for an hour and a half attending to their needs, seems to exercise a good influence over our miserable customers. The police have told us that there has been a change for the better amongst them since these daily visits. They are made possible entirely through the liberality of the readers of LONGMAN'S.

'Just where an arch spans the street,' a gentleman writes who paid a visit to the 'Donna,' 'in a snug corner formed by the arch and a huge warehouse, and separated from the street by strong iron railings, the "Donna" dispenses its daily dinners to the unemployed. The barrow, painted blue, is run in, the shelter of a little covered counter is raised, and the work of unloading begins. The Sister and her lady *aide*, being already on the spot, are soon hard at work, dumping the steaming contents of long cylinders upon the deal counter, and cutting them up into halfpenny portions. "Fingers before forks" is the rule, and white hands are soon in a very greasy state. Then the gates are thrown open,

and work begins in earnest with the motley throng, for the most part unwashed, ragged, with broken, sippy shoes that show the red, chilblained feet only too plainly. One thing is painfully striking. *They nearly all stoop.* The man who feels that terrible "gone" sensation produced only by prolonged abstinence from food, droops unconsciously. There is no more distressing sight than the "hunger-stoop," and most of these poor fellows have it badly. In and out files the double stream of ragged humanity. There is no talking, no jostling; the very orders for food are given in subdued tones or in dumb show. Plum-duff seems mostly chosen by those who can spend but a halfpenny, though a few take soup—wholesome, substantial stuff, which would certainly be our choice if reduced to a last halfpenny. One man has two soups, while a few of the moneyed ones have both soup and pudding. The genuine out-of-work man, who has got down in the world through no fault of his own, and would rise again if he could, is too honest, not to say too proud, to resort to trickery in begging. He eats his portion of soup or duff, or looks on in hungry silence while others eat, and goes his way without complaint. That, we take it, is the difference in a nutshell between deserving and undeserving destitution; and, if our observation be worth anything, the "Donna" is doing much for the former.'

'A han'somer set-out of puddens than this here lot I never did see!' was the remark of one of our customers. He stood in a corner near the truck, with his hands in his pockets, softly whistling, while his eyes travelled from 'plum' to 'plain.' Finally his choice was made, and as he walked off with a goodly slice in his hand, he said regretfully, 'I can't afford more than this; but anyhow I've got as good a bit of "plum" as any man in London, so that's something to be thankful for.'

'I agrees with the gentleman as spoke last,' a big, gaunt-looking fellow said loudly, as if addressing the company in general. 'The puddens are good puddens, and there's only one thing as I finds fault with.'

Here he paused, and fixing his eyes reproachfully upon the servers behind the counter, he continued: "I blames the Sisters for not a-coming on Sundays as well as week-days, for there's a many of us as gits no dinner at all unless we gits it here.'

'The Sisters have got other fish to fry of a Sunday, old chap,' a third man put in. 'S'pose you try and find an extra halfpenny of a Saturday and buy a slice of "plain" for next day?'

'What would be the good of that?' our dissatisfied customer asked scornfully. 'Why, bless your heart, if I did buy an extra slice, I'd be sure to eat it before the day was out!'

'I can eat 'em both,' said a poverty-stricken man who was the happy possessor of a penny, but before he had finished the first piece he gave the other to a mate, saying, 'Here, come on, we'll go shares anyhow.'

'An 'aporth of pudden and the loan of a knife,' was another petition; then the portion was carefully cut into two equal pieces, 'one for me and one for my mate, we always share together; although this morning it was only a halfpenny.'

Some of the men had been to the Sisters' free concert the night before, and were talking it over among themselves. 'I was there,' said one; 'I always go, and would not miss for anything.' 'I was there last night,' said another, 'and I *did* enjoy myself. The coffee and the piece of bread and butter was the first food I had tasted that day.'

One of our visitors said that poor F——, a customer of the 'Donna,' reminded her of a half-starved, sooty London sparrow. He was busy picking up and eating the crumbs and broken bits of pudding remaining after the other men had had their meal. 'I can't afford a dinner, ma'am,' he said, 'but I'd be thankful for them crumbs. I couldn't beg from any one but the Sisters, only I know you're friendly-like to us poor chaps.' There was nothing left but scraps, yet, when he had made a meal of them, his gaunt, pale face really looked a little brighter. He told us how hard it was for 'weakly folk' like himself to get on. He is a bargee, but after a bad illness was not strong enough for work, and even now employers choose a strong-looking man rather than him.

Sometimes the poor fellows attempt a rather grim joke.

'What a nuisance all this loose silver is in my pocket! I can't find the right coin,' one ragged customer said, with a twinkle in his eye, after fumbling for a long time in his pocket. The lady-visitor smiled, and said, 'I expect you wish that were more than a joke?'

'Yes, that I do,' he replied; 'I've only one halfpenny left. Here it is—I thought I'd lost it.'

It is a matter of great moment how to spend one's last halfpenny, and to get what is most satisfying at the smallest outlay. One poor fellow held three farthings in his hand for some time, evidently weighing well in his mind what to do with it.

'I've a fancy for two courses, you see, ma'am,' he said at last.

'See, now, them two will buy a ha'porth of *dark*' (i.e. a sort of plum roll), 'and this here,' laying down the last farthing, 'will get me half a basin of soup. So that'll set us all right.'

One to whom drink has been a grievous temptation is at present trying hard to do better, and he makes the 'Donna' his bank, bringing his small earnings to be kept safe.

'It'll go to the "public" if you don't hold on to it for me,' he said, in a shame-faced way; 'but if you mind it for me, I may get a decent coat by-and-by with my savings.'

'I think the most touching gift I ever received in my life was a pair of shoe-laces,' said one of the lady-helpers. 'I have them now, and though I am not a sentimental person by any means, I really think I must keep them always. One cold, windy day, when I was helping at the food-truck, I saw among the other men a poor fellow whose miserable appearance made him noticeable even among so many sad-looking creatures. The way in which he shuffled up to the counter, laid down a halfpenny, and asked for a slice of "pudden," showed somehow that he was utterly out of heart. I gave him what he asked for and an extra slice as well, just saying, "I'm sure you could eat this too."

'He looked up with a surprised expression on his face. I fancy it must have been long since anyone had spoken a kind word to him. Then with mumbled thanks he went away to eat his dinner. Presently, while busy cutting up the pudding, I saw my poor friend hastily approaching. He just glanced at me and hurriedly laid a pair of boot-laces on the counter beside me. "That's for you, lady," he said, and walked off without another word.

'It was weeks before he appeared at the counter again: I recognised him directly; he was still ragged, still hungry-looking. Trade had evidently not prospered.

"A ha'porth of plain, please," he said, in the same hopeless sort of voice.

'When he had been served, I said, "You must let me thank you, now. Your boot-laces were excellent, and I want to buy some more as soon as the dinner-hour is over, so please wait for me."

'The dull, melancholy face lighted up again as it had once before.

"Thank you, lady," was all he said, but I think his slice of "plain" tasted all the better with the prospect before him of at last getting rid of part of his stock-in-trade.'

Another of the 'Donna' men has just been raised to the

height of joy by a letter received from a former employer, saying that if he liked to return to Lincolnshire, he could give him employment throughout the summer with a traction-engine. To the poor fellow this means prosperity, though it will take him a week to walk to Lincolnshire. 'For I'm sick to death of idleness, and that's the truth,' he said, his dull, careworn countenance changed and lighted up by hope.

One of our unemployed guests told us with a look of horror on his face that he had seen a man die in the street. 'Cold and starvation, that was what it was, ma'am. We've a many of us had to bear them two trials, but it gives you a turn to see a poor chap fall down at your side without a word, and die straight away without so much as a call for help. He isn't the only one by a good lot that have gone off the same way, but it's different reading of 'em in a paper to seeing it happen, ain't it?'

A pale, feckless creature, F. J., who could not do more than very rough work were it offered to him, calls himself a fish-porter, and shuffles off to the fish-market every day, where the very most he can earn is fourpence. As long as that is secured, F. J. is quite content; he asks for nothing better, threepence for bed, supper, and breakfast at the Night Refuge, and a penny for dinner at the 'Sisters' pudden board.' The closing of the Refuge in summer is a blow to him, but even for him trade may brisk up a bit in the summer time.

As we said last year, it is to the Night Refuge that we must turn for exact records of many of the cases which cannot be individually dealt with or permanently helped during the dinner-hour at the 'Donna.' From December 10, 1890, to May 31, 1891, 12,435 men were received at the Refuge. This winter it opened in November. A poor man tapped a Sister on the shoulder as she passed him in the street. 'Sister, when is that place in Tenter Street going to open? If you ladies knew what it is to us fellows to have a place like that to come to at night, you would never close it; it's kept many a man from throwing himself over the bridge—the mere sight of them big fires alone is enough to comfort him.'

Punctually as the church bells clash out six o'clock the 'Friend in Need' doors open, but long before that the men have assembled. After tramping about all day they seem to long to be in sight of the building where rest, food, and warmth await them.

On a rainy day it is pitiful to see how wet are all the ragged coats, and to hear the men coughing as the wind whistles round

the corner. There is very little conversation; they have passed the stage of discomfort which finds consolation in grumbling. One poor fellow, however, was heard to growl out on such an evening: 'The folks from the Mission House might come round a bit earlier, and admit us sooner than six.'

'Too big a swell for this place,' another said, scowling at him. 'They're busy all day, and I know that.'

The Sister once found a man at the door whose clothes were so wringing wet that he really looked as if he had been just pulled out of the Thames. 'To tell you the truth, ma'am,' he said, when questioned, shivering as he spoke, 'I was out all last night, and what with fatigue and the east wind, I was so cold I didn't know how to stand it. There was a jet of steam coming out into the street from a factory close by, and I stood by it to get warm. It was all right while I was there, but it's made me wet through, as you see.'

The food at the Refuge has been a little changed; instead of pea-soup every night, Scotch broth is given on alternate nights, with the third of a loaf; it is greatly liked. For breakfast the men have a pint of cocoa and the third of a loaf; and on Sundays bread and butter, with coffee; a large meat pie for dinner, and bread and butter, with tea, for supper.

The first night the 'Friend in Need' was opened last winter a respectable set of men were admitted; amongst them three grooms who had come to London to seek work, and two young lads fresh from the country, with bright faces.

One who wished to go abroad was sent to Dr. Barnardo; another, whose father was a doctor of music, is now helping the caretaker to clean down the Refuge for the sake of his bed, breakfast, and supper. The poor fellow goes out every day to seek work, and, as he says, his clothes get more worn every day, and he loses his chance. He has excellent testimonials; was engaged as accountant and collector, but lost his place because the firm gave up.

It is three or four years since this night shelter was opened for the homeless unemployed who throng to the 'Donna' for food, but whom no ordinarily charitable Christian in England can endure to think of on winter nights. It would be impossible to say how much good has been done by it, or how many lives *permanently* lifted out of despair and misery through that Refuge; for the Sisters' aim is to give the men a fresh chance, which is often done by the loan or gift of respectable clothes. 'With such help the men often do regain their footing,' the

Sisters write, 'more often than not. During last winter we used funds given to us for the purpose in employing at Kilburn relays of men out of work drawn from the Refuge, and we can testify that the experiment has had the most gratifying results. A little band of these men is even now (May 1891) hard at work, scouring walls, whitewashing, &c., at the Orphanage, the cheery faces of the men contrasting forcibly with the dejected, shame-faced looks that met us when a few weeks ago we invited the tattered, and torn, and hungry crew to take part in our spring cleaning. To many, the temporary assistance has been the beginning of better things. W——, who came to us literally in despair, stayed here until he got an excellent appointment in the detective police force. N—— remained with us until he found well-paid work with a perambulator-maker, where he has every hope of doing well. J—— returned to a former employer, who had only dismissed him through slackness of trade, and was delighted to take him back.

'P—— was a clerk by profession. He came to the door and asked for work so earnestly that it seemed almost *impossible* to refuse.

"My wife and her new-born baby are without a fire or comfort of any sort; for heaven's sake let me earn a little for them!"

"Could you let me see your handwriting?" the Sister said. "We might give you something to do in the office."

'Poor P—— took pen and paper, but his fingers shook with nervous eagerness. "I can't," he said; "you must take my word for it. I shall be able to control myself presently, but all this trouble has quite unmanned me."

'Then he turned away, ashamed of the tears that ran down his cheeks. He is still in our employ, and his work has always been most satisfactory.'

Work was found at the Kilburn Home for a paperhanger; he saved all the money he received, bringing it back to Dock Street to be taken care of. When he had saved five pounds he was helped with a little interest, and clothes kindly sent by friends, and is now doing well in Canada.

For more than two months eight 'Donna' customers were employed in the Sisters' office at Kilburn. It would be impossible to describe the change in their appearance during that time; the expression of their faces seemed to alter.

'The one thing we dread, Sister,' they once said, 'is to hear that you have nothing more for us to do, and that our happy time

here must come to an end.' They had all known the horrors of 'nights out.' Only one of them had fallen so low through faults of his own, and he frankly owned it.

'Here's a shilling for the Night Refuge,' a respectable artisan said, 'for I have been one myself of them as spend their nights tramping round this dreary London.'

'I didn't know times had ever been quite so bad as that with you, Mr. Jackson,' said the visitor, looking at the respectable artisan, whose face, nevertheless, was heavily lined and scored, and had a shadow on it that will probably remain there till his dying day. Men and women who have been face to face with death and starvation never lose a certain look that those who go to and fro among them can easily recognise.

'Why, it's three years ago now,' Jackson began, 'that I was thrown out of work. You remember Messrs. Handcock and Wells, the big drapers in High Holborn, came to smash suddenly, when the cashier bolted with a great sum of money. Well, that firm had employed three hundred men, in different capacities, and I was among the shop-walkers. Quite a good position it was, you see, and well paid too, for they dealt well with their servants, those employers, and we didn't think very small beer of ourselves. We wouldn't be called "hands," we were "employés." Then the smash came, and several of us found ourselves in a very queer street indeed.'

The speaker paused and drew a long breath, while the shadow on his face deepened.

'It was a hard, hard time. I remember the first night I spent out in the streets,' he went on presently. 'How I vowed to myself it should be the last, that I'd do everything, anything, rather than go skulking along, not daring even to sit down on a doorstep like the rest, for fear of being told to move on. I didn't think then that I should have to grow accustomed to it. Why, I got to wait for the "Move on!" almost like waiting for the clock to strike. What the poor fellows do in the depth of winter I can't tell. For even then, towards the end especially, one got chilled through to the bone, and I'd wake for good at daybreak feeling more like a dead man than a living one, with nothing open but the coffee stalls, and not a halfpenny for a cup of coffee, and with nowhere to go and nothing to do, for at least two hours, when I'd begin to seek for work again.'

'I remember a queer thing that happened once. I'd found a quiet place, up a flight of steps leading to some offices, where

I thought I really could get a bit of rest. And I lay down there on the pavement and fell half asleep, till I heard a step close by, and started up, thinking it was a policeman. But it wasn't one. He looked like a gentleman as well as I could see. It was pretty dark, and I said, "Don't tell of me, there's a good man."

"I'm not likely to do that, my poor fellow," he said, and he just stayed quiet, waiting for the dawn, like me. But I fell asleep again, and it was light when I woke, and he was gone. But there, lying by me, was a little heap of coppers, and I knew he'd left 'em on purpose, and, maybe, 'twas all he had. Well, I've not forgotten him in my prayers. I'm not sure if those coppers weren't the beginning of better things, for I'd a rare breakfast that day at the first coffee stall I came across, you may be sure. And afterwards I got a bit of work. I'd two or three more nights out for all that; then I came across an old comrade, who knew where they were wanting hands, and he lent me an old suit of his to make me a bit decent, and I went, and was took on. I've never been out of work since.'

'Among a hundred others,' a Sister writes, 'we noticed F. H. His face was not pale, but grey. When we spoke to him, his answers came in a hollow, sepulchral tone. He told us how he had spent the day, slinking from one back street to another, trying to escape notice, because his clothes were hardly even decent. He said that it would be impossible to describe the anguish of mind felt after tramping the streets all night. "When morning dawns and you see other luckier chaps going to their work refreshed and rested, while you yourself are footsore and half dead with fatigue, and can't get a job anyhow, you are just about in despair," he said. "There don't seem a chance for you anywhere."'

'I bless the day when I went there,' said one poor fellow who came to the 'Friend in Need' almost in despair, and has now for ten months worked in one of the Sisters' Homes most satisfactorily, spending his Sundays in giving voluntary help in the soup-kitchen or Sunday school.

On last Good Friday a magic-lantern service was held for the men, who thoroughly cared for it; some of them wept, stopping the Sisters afterwards to say it reminded them of the days when they were children. One man, in particular, said it would not be his fault if he wasn't a better man after seeing all that had been done for him. Archdeacon Jones held a service for the men another evening at the Refuge, and spoke warmly of the work done for them, admiring especially the cleanliness of the house.

The very respectability of many of our guests is to us most affecting, their patient faces, their gentle manners and speech, telling so plainly of 'better days.'

Another much-to-be-pitied class that drifts into the Refuge consists of men discharged from the great hospitals, cured, but too weak to work. How often we have wished that some wealthy benefactor would either give us or leave us enough to build the convalescent hospital we often wish for, to which the London doctors might send patients for a week's good feeding and rest before they return to their work! We have the site, but not a penny towards the building.

The Refuge is no place for them; they need extra care and comfort. Yet they are all most thankful for even the 'Friend in Need.' They seem quite astonished at the interest expressed in their concerns. We have seen a great, gaunt-looking fellow brush his arm across his eyes, trying to hide the tears called forth by the sound of a gentle, sympathising voice. But perhaps it had been months since any such tones had been heard.

A man was noticed one night whose manner and appearance were quite those of a gentleman. 'A year ago my health failed,' he said, 'and I was forced to give up my tutorship in a foreign family. Since then I have found it impossible to get employment, and am now reduced to the utmost want. Yes, I have had the education of a gentleman. My father had property in Ireland, but you know what that is; and after his death we never received a penny. I have had no work since just before Christmas, when I got a little wrapper-directing to do.'

One of the poor unemployed for whose help the 'Donna' exists wrote an account of his search for work, called 'A Week in the Open Air.' I give a few extracts, without any alterations, of his narrative, taking it up on Wednesday, when he had been on the tramp, day and night, from the previous Saturday.

'I had now 2*d.* left. Famishing, I spent it all in a coffee shop near London Bridge, and read the papers, sitting there till 11 p.m., when I was turned out penniless, but warmed and refreshed. Why go into Wednesday night? Tramp! tramp! sleep on bridge or on door-step. Drizzling rain, sharp wind, and no home! Oh, how I longed for my bed at my old home! just to creep in, if only for one hour, and draw the blankets over me. Thursday night passed, and all Friday I tramped the streets—the cold, crue streets of London. I had still my knife, an ordinary shilling one, but if I could only get 2*d.* or 3*d.* for it. I asked a lot to

buy it, but was only laughed at. I sold it at last to a man who kept a coffee stall at King's Cross Station for a cup of coffee, one slice of bread and butter, and 1*d.* in coin. The latter part of Friday night I slept near the railings in Euston Square. Did I say sleep? I am wrong. A short drop of the head for about ten minutes, and then a start, a fit of shivering, and a cough.

'I was by this time almost senseless. My feet were so swollen that I had to cut the lace of my boots open. I could only limp along and that with great pain—I thought I should have died, and welcomed death. The long agony of that night! People, wanderers like myself, spoke to me. I do not know if I answered or not. A dull heavy drumming in my ears seemed almost as if it would drive me mad. At last Saturday dawned, and once more I limped back to my old lodging, when, oh joy! there was a letter for me containing a small sum of money. But it was nearly too late. On paying the landlady a part of what was due she allowed me to go to bed, and gave me some hot tea. Breakfast I could not eat. I could only lie in bed and shiver. All the veins of my hands and legs were swollen, and still that awful drumming. Towards evening, however, I mended, and by Monday morning was quite recovered. It was then my good chance to hear of the Sisters, and I was fortunate enough to find employment. God bless the Home, I say, and all its inmates.'

We must not omit a few words concerning the work-rooms for the poor wives of the unemployed, and widows, by which in many a case the wolf is kept from the door while husbands and fathers are out of work, and halfpennies earned for their dinners, perhaps, at the 'Donna.' The funds only allowed, last winter, of about forty being employed for three afternoons in the week, earning 9*d.* each day, and it is very trying to refuse the continual entreaties to be 'taken on.' One poor woman's death seemed quite to bring *hope* to many, and it was hard indeed to decide on her successor. An old Board school in Berners Street, Cannon Street Road, has been turned into a new and nice Mission House, which makes it brighter for the workers; the room is warm and cheery, there is a delightful meal of tea and bread and butter to look forward to, and besides, they are earning what will keep them from utter starvation.

'It just stands between many of us and the workhouse or starvation,' said one old dame. 'Last winter was bad enough, any way, but we *couldn't* have got through without the two shillings a week. It mayn't seem much to rich people, but it

means bread and tea enough to exist on, and in the winter you can't expect to do more than that !'

'A month now I've been laid by,' another said, who was prevented from even asking for readmission by severe illness, 'and him earning nothing, nothing ! He goes looking for work every day, but he's consumptive, and they won't employ him. While I was at the work-room we seemed able to get ahead somehow, but we can't now. I've striven and striven, and you may see for yourself that we've kept things clean. But we shall have to give up !' The quiet despair with which she spoke was terrible. The room was spotless, but there was no fire in the grate. Her daughter is now at the work-room, and the Sisters hope that, in spite of all, the family may pull through.

'Oh, lady, do ask the Sisters to let me do some work for them,' a very respectable-looking woman said. 'I'd do anything, *anything*. Me and my old man's had nothing to eat but a little bread for this three days. He's been out from five this morning looking for work, and he's just come back worn out and hopeless. There's but little chance for an old man like him getting taken on. God help us ! there'll be only the workhouse before us soon.'

With such daily applications, it is hard to see a good half of the bright Mission room unoccupied, save by empty tables and benches. The poor women who would fain rush in to fill it are kept outside by want of material and want of funds. The Sisters are forced to draw the line, else no workers could be paid at all. One year a splendid bale arrived at 42A Dock Street, from a gentleman reader of LONGMAN'S, for the work-room, containing several pieces of serge, thirty yards long each. This was indeed a Godsend. Every two-shilling order dropped into the post for the Sister-in-Charge, 42A Dock Street, marked 'For a woman's wages at Work-room,' gives her the work-time there for a week.

The few instances selected in this paper of the need for the help given through the 'Donna' and its adjuncts might be multiplied a hundredfold. The difficulty is to choose from the great number of sad stories known by those who live amongst the poor. Nor have the most sensational been chosen ; some were almost too heartrending to give. They are all only 'ower true tales.'

The greatest satisfaction for the readers of this Magazine must be in the thought of the many who have been *permanently* helped and given a fresh start in life through their support of the 'Donna.' The poor men come to it in the last destitution, and

are there brought in touch with those who will certainly give them a helping hand, and whose whole lives are spent in the effort to do so.

To conclude with another pleasant fact:—‘The “Donna” Knitting Society,’ mentioned for the first time in this Magazine in January 1891, has been a great success. No fewer than 124 members have joined through reading that notice, and the whole number of woollies sent last winter and spring amounted to 226 comforters, besides 10 shirts, 10 pairs of socks, 10 pairs of mitts, old clothes, &c., and 10*l.* 1*s.* in money. So many people write to ask for ‘the rules of the Society,’ that it may save trouble to call attention to the words in LONGMAN’S a year ago, first mentioning ‘The “Donna” Knitting Society, of which *the one rule is very simple and easy*:—*To send at least one woollen comforter, in knitting, crochet, or material, any time before Christmas each year, to the Secretary, Miss Trench, D.K.S., Pulham St. Mary, Norfolk.*’ When a large number are collected, they are sent to the Night Refuge, and on one evening given to all the men present. Their pleasure is in the warmth, softness, and bright colours of the comforters is very great; they think a great deal of the last quality, crimson being perhaps the favourite colour. The comforters should be a yard and a half long, and twelve inches wide. Parcels sent *after* Christmas will, of course, be most welcome. One was sent from New South Wales last August, as her ‘first contribution to the D.K.S.,’ by a lady who writes:—‘For some time past I have read with the deepest interest the accounts of the *Don* and *Donna* in LONGMAN’S MAGAZINE.’

One great pleasure at the Refuge has been an old harmonium, which is now quite worn out and cannot be used. Is it too much to hope that some kind reader, with whom an organ has perhaps taken the place of an harmonium, may be glad to supply this want?

Last Christmas Eve all the men at the ‘Friend in Need’ were given a muffler and a Christmas card, after a little evening service. A hundred and eight were present. The gratitude of the men was as great as if they had received 5*l.* They nearly all wished the Sisters a happy Christmas. On Christmas Day they had a splendid dinner of meat-pies, potatoes, plum pudding, and apples. Out of the whole number not one man was the worse for drink; they behaved beautifully at the service, and several told the caretaker it had been the happiest Christmas of their lives.

II. STATEMENT BY THE EDITOR.

THE past year has been a somewhat disappointing one in the history of the 'Donna.' The trade done has been somewhat in excess of the amount of last year. The object of this charity—is of all charities rightly conducted—is to minimise an evil; and while it is a matter for satisfaction that our resources have been equal to the calls that have been made on them, it is a matter for deep regret that the calls should have been so great. The following table of the number of halfpenny portions served during each month for the last five years will show the exact position:—

TABLE OF NUMBER OF MEN SERVED AT THE 'DONNA' TRUCK.

Month.	1886-7.	1887-8.	1888-9.	1889-90.	1890-91.
November . . .	12,415	13,899	14,502	10,920	9,011
December . . .	12,842	9,799	12,123	8,634	8,702
January . . .	15,217	13,930	16,414	12,446	9,282
February . . .	13,337	12,442	12,549	9,524	8,651
March . . .	14,761	11,123	11,640	9,046	8,222
April . . .	15,466	11,432	10,481	9,262	8,448
May . . .	10,110	12,661	11,563	5,714	9,010
June . . .	8,089	8,973	6,241	5,892	7,244
July . . .	6,618	13,171	6,516	5,076	7,334
August . . .	7,429	13,764	9,261	5,528	7,914
September . . .	8,523	12,949	8,208	5,922	10,076
October . . .	18,462	20,275	10,265	9,990	11,108
	143,269	154,418	129,763	97,954	105,002

It appears that over 7,000 portions have been served in 1890-91 in excess of the number for 1889-90. This is not a very great rise, but we hoped that the reduction in the amount of casual labour employed at the docks and wharves, and the increase in the number of permanent hands, would have enabled us to show a more favourable result. It will be observed, however, that the number is very considerably below the years 1886-7 and 1887-8.

As regards finance, the account printed below speaks for itself. Our balance in hand has sunk from £73*l.* 7*s.* 3*d.* to 15*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* If, therefore, the readers of this Magazine are still satisfied that the work is a good one, and are anxious that it should be carried on with the same efficiency as in past years, we can appeal to them with confidence to supply the necessary means.

'DONNA' FOOD-TRUCK ACCOUNT, 1890-91.

		<i>Receipts.</i>		<i>Expenditure.</i>		
1890	Balance in hand	£	s. d.	1890	£	s. d.
"	November	.	.	Nov.	Cost of food	37 10 11
"	December	.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i>	8 0 0
"	January	.	.		Basins	0 4 0
"	February	.	.	Dec.	Cost of food	36 5 2
"	March	.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; fares, 6 <i>d.</i>	8 0 6
"	April	.	.	1891	Cost of food	38 13 6
"	May	.	.	Jan.	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> ; cooking expenses, 6 <i>l.</i> 5 <i>s.</i>	10 0 0
"	June	.	.		Repairing truck	2 10 0
"	July	.	.	Feb.	Cost of food	36 0 11
"	August	.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i>	8 0 0
"	September	.	.		Re-lettering barrow	0 8 6
"	October	.	.	March	Cost of food	34 5 2
"	Subscriptions	.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i>	8 0 0
		.	.		Fares	0 2 6
		.	.	April	Cost of food	35 4 0
		.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i>	8 0 0
		.	.		Basins	0 4 0
		.	.	May	Cost of food	37 10 10
		.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> ; cooking expenses, 6 <i>l.</i> 5 <i>s.</i>	10 0 0
		.	.	June	Cost of food	30 3 8
		.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i>	8 0 0
		.	.		Fares	0 2 6
		.	.	July	Cost of food	30 11 2
		.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i>	8 0 0
		.	.		Fares	0 2 6
		.	.	Aug.	Cost of food	32 19 6
		.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i>	8 0 0
		.	.		Repairing soup cans and tins	0 12 0
		.	.	Sept.	Cost of food	41 19 8
		.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> ; cooking expenses, 6 <i>l.</i> 5 <i>s.</i>	10 0 0
		.	.	Oct.	Cost of food	46 5 8
		.	.		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; fares, 4 <i>d.</i>	8 0 4
		.	.		Balance in hand	15 16 2
		.	.			<u>£559 13 2</u>

£

s.

d.

559132

£

s.

d.

559132

Received for the Night Refuge. £ 79 11 0
 " " Work Room . 25 1 0

Banbury Town.

‘**W**HITHER away, little maid in gray,
 All in the sunshine, whither away?
 Are you seeking flowers for a daisy chain—
 Will you weave a crown of the golden grain,
 A glittering golden crown to wear
 All on the curls of your shining hair?’

‘Whither away, little maiden mine?
 Would you pluck a posy of eglantine?
 Do you seek for the fortunate shamrock leaf?
 Do you come to gather an ample sheaf
 Of bearded barley or stately wheat—
 Dear little maid with the hurrying feet?’

‘Nay, sir, none of these things for me,
 Though the flowers are many and fair to see—
 Golden the grain, and cool the shade—
 Pleasant the rivulet-bed to wade—
 But mine is a journey of high renown,
 For I’m off and away to Banbury Town!’

‘Oh, Banbury Town is bright and gay;
 Banbury folk are rich and great.
 Want may walk with you all the way;
 But it never can win through Banbury gate;
 Only delight and joy are known
 To those who dwell in Banbury Town.’

‘Banbury Town is large and fair,
 Banbury folk are kind and free,
 And all the lads and the lasses there
 Will gladly, merrily welcome me;
 Gold and gems and a silken gown
 Are waiting for me in Banbury Town.’

'Tell me not of the yellow grain,
Of running water, or cool green shade;
How can I weave a daisy chain
When I've far to go e'er the daylight fade?
And richer far is the glittering crown
That I shall wear in Banbury Town!

'But, oh! for the weary, weary way,
Up and down and over the hill;
All through the heat of the summer's day
Tired and tearful—but onward still—
Right foot, left foot—up and down:
It's a long, long way to Banbury Town!'

'Stay, little maid, and pause awhile;
Rest on the step of the shady stile.
The birds are round us in busy throng,
Singing their wonderful wordless song.
Is it not all as fair to see
As even Banbury Town can be?

'Joy and plenty may crown the street,
Here are soft ways for weary feet;
Royal robes may await you there,
Here we tend you with gentle care;
There is gaiety, here is love,
With the selfsame golden sun above.

'Banbury Town may be fair to see,
But dearer still is a well-loved face;
Banbury folk may be kind and free,
But home is ever the happiest place:
So stay, little maid, nor hasten down
To join the throng in Banbury Town.

'Stay, little maid, nor strive alone
To reach that wonderful far-off land;
Perhaps when life and its tasks are done
We shall enter its portals hand in hand,
And when the sun of our life goes down,
It may rise again on Banbury Town.'

CLOTHILDE BALFOUR.

On Sight.

CHAPTER I.

‘**H**ENRY,’ began Mrs. Duffield, ‘this sort of thing really cannot go on much longer.’

The master and mistress of Ruckton Hall were sitting at breakfast one fine June morning, with some half-dozen yards of damask table-cloth between them. Mr. Duffield was ensconced behind the *Times*; Mrs. Duffield, having absorbed her scanty post, crumbled her roll between her fingers and threw inquiring glances across the table. It was not until she had twice let her spoon drop into her saucer, and five times ostentatiously cleared her throat, without causing the *Times* to move by an inch, that she gave utterance to the words above mentioned.

‘What sort of thing?’ asked Mr. Duffield sharply, emerging from behind his paper.

Instead of answering his question, Mrs. Duffield said, ‘Do you know that it is three months to-day since Adela’s wedding-day?’

‘Well, do you want her back again?’ And Mr. Duffield grinned, not very amiably.

‘I don’t want her back again, Henry; but I want—’

‘Well?’

‘I want another Adela.’

‘Good gracious!’ said Mr. Duffield, laying down the *Times* and staring at his wife in consternation.

‘It’s no use,’ that lady burst out; ‘I have tried everything, and it is no use. If Adela had made the sort of marriage I wanted her to make—that young Ingram, for instance—I might possibly have stood it. To have her within a drive wouldn’t have been like losing her, but having a daughter in India is just about the same as having no daughter at all, and I positively cannot get on without a daughter. I am too old to be training myself to new ways. I have tried the village and the schoolhouse and the farm-

yard, but it is all no use. Taking round packets of tea is not the same as taking a girl about, and it is nonsense to pretend that it is; and choosing pinafores for the Sunday-school children will never make up for the choosing of Adela's frocks. It is all very well for you, with your books and your studies: but for me to get into that victoria by myself is worse than having no victoria to get into; and as for the drawing-room, why, I had much rather sit in the kitchen now, if I had the choice, just to escape from the ticking of that clock.'

'Pray come to the point as soon as you conveniently can,' said Mr. Duffield, as his wife paused for breath.

Having given her husband one more tentative glance, she came to the conclusion that bluntness would be the best diplomacy.

'My half-sister Henrietta has got eight daughters,' she observed without further preliminary.

'And you would like to ship one over from Melbourne? Ha! Is that it?'

Mrs. Duffield played shamefacedly with her teaspoon.

'Well, do you know, Henry, I *have* been wondering lately whether any of them are presentable. Of course, they may *not* be; but if they were, the idea would, in a sense, cut both ways, for it would fill up our empty house here, while over there it would give them a little breathing-space. They are very badly off, you know. Where are you going to, Henry? Surely you are not annoyed with me! I only meant in case you had no objection—'

Mr. Duffield had reached the door before he stopped short and faced round. 'Will you swear that the sole of her foot shall never touch the floor of my study?' he asked abruptly.

'Oh, Henry! No, never, if you don't want.'

'And will she keep out of my way when I am taking my constitutional, so as not to come mincing across my train of thought?'

'Yes, yes—certainly.'

'And will she not expect me to talk to her at dinner, any more than Adela expected me to talk?'

'Of course not, Henry. Oh, anything you want!'

'Then have over whichever of your eight half-nieces you like best, but let there be no fuss about it; and, for pity's sake, don't let me hear another word on the subject till the thing is accomplished.'

'Oh, Henry, I never expected this!' and Mrs. Duffield made a dart towards the door. 'The Australian mail goes to-morrow.'

How good, how awfully good, you are! I really think you are an angel!

‘Possibly, but I have got no time to discuss that point now. There is some very urgent work waiting for me upstairs,’ and, with a hasty glance at his watch, Mr. Duffield beat a final retreat.

There was always work waiting upstairs for Mr. Duffield, and it was always urgent. Not that any particular consequences, either to himself or others, would have been entailed by its non-accomplishment, but simply because this excellent elderly gentleman belonged to the order of persons who delight in pouring water into sieves. Possessed of a more than ample fortune, and a prosperous estate, which might have afforded him various ways of being happy, he preferred to be happy in his own way, which consisted in bending the powers of his mind to the task of discovering whether it was worth while having a mind at all, or, in other words, writing works with such titles as, *Is Humanity a Mistake? Why Exist? &c.*, which nobody read, though there were always plenty of publishers ready to publish them—at his risk. The life of a galley-slave must, after all, possess some hidden charms of its own, since it is selected by so many who might live at their ease.

‘The question now is,’ said Mrs. Duffield, apostrophising the tea-urn, as the door closed behind her husband, ‘*which* of the eight? The two youngest must be mere children, and I fancy the eldest must be *passée*. But surely among eight there ought to be *one* pretty one, and after taking Adela about I really don’t think I could stand a plain one. How would it be if I were to write for their photographs before I made up my mind?’ Mrs. Duffield gazed hard at the tea-urn, and then shook her head. ‘That would mean three months’ delay. I would rather risk the plain girl than that! I really cannot go on in this way any longer.’

It was quite true: she could not go on any longer in this way, for Mrs. Duffield was one of those women who are mapped out by nature, not so much as either wives, or mothers, or heads of establishments, but simply as chaperons. The chaperon is a quite distinct species from the matchmaker, for, while the eyes of the latter remain pretty obstinately fixed on the opposite sex, and while, to her, an opportunity for displaying her charge is no more than a means to an end, to the chaperon the means is its own end; and, in reviewing the successes of an evening, she is not so apt to go by the glances of admiration which she has seen in the

épouseur's eyes, as by those of annoyance and envy read out of the eyes of other chaperons. Of course she expects her charge to marry, some day—every properly chaperoned charge does marry—but she expects it in a distant and indeterminate, not in a near and definite, fashion.

Also, it had been with a shock of almost unpleasant surprise that, after four London seasons, joined to a proportionate amount of country-house visiting, Mrs. Duffield received the news of Adela having made her choice in life. There was no objection to make to the choice in question, except the fact of its being a choice, and thereby robbing Mrs. Duffield of something to chaperon. What was the good of going to tennis-parties when there was no longer the excitement of seeing Adela's last new frock eclipsing all other frocks present? And as for the county balls, it was hard to say which was worse—to go there without Adela, or to stay at home, grinding her teeth at the thought of all the lesser stars foolishly spreading their rays in the absence of the chief luminary.

But now all this was going to be different. Even a lesser star, properly chaperoned and properly dressed, might emit a very tolerable amount of radiance. The mail did not go till next day, but the letter to Henrietta was written within that same hour. It was written 'in a rush;' not until the middle of the fourth page was a pause for reflection found necessary; but this one, to make up, was long.

Everything needful had been said. To all appearances there remained nothing to do but to decide upon the degree of sisterly affection to be infused into the wind-up, and yet Mrs. Duffield's pen remained balanced uncertainly between her fingers. She was loth to close the letter without throwing out some hint of the thought which weighed heaviest on her mind, but undoubtedly the matter was delicate. It would scarcely do to say point-blank, 'Dearest Henrietta, please let me have your prettiest girl,' and still less would 'Mind you don't send me a plain one!' serve the turn.

Finally, after long and earnest consultation with her inner self, the following sentences were put on paper:—

'I don't know whether you are aware that our neighbourhood is one of the liveliest and most sociable in this part of England, so that a girl who enjoys dancing is sure to have plenty of fun. Also there can be no harm in mentioning, *in confidence*, to you that there is a very fair proportion of marriageable men,

consequently quite a decent amount of chances—for a pretty girl.'

'There!' said Mrs. Duffield, as, with a sigh of relief, she laid down her pen, 'I think I have done all that in decency can be done—the rest must be left to fate!'

CHAPTER II.

'It's the best joke I've ever heard of!' said Minna Lindley, throwing herself back in a defective basket-chair, the better to enjoy the joke in question.

'Joke?' repeated her mother, with a feeble attempt at reproof; 'my dear Minna, it is by far the most serious thing that has occurred for at least two years.'

'It's like a bit out of a fairy-tale,' put in another voice. 'I feel as if I had a fairy godmother.'

'My dear Chrissie——'

'Surely there *must* be some other motive behind it all. Why should she take to hungering and thirsting after us after having only barely remembered our existence for the last twenty years?'

'But, Gracie my dear, she had a daughter——'

'Well, and she's got a daughter still, though the daughter happens to be in India at this moment. She must be a queer lot, anyway, and I know that *I'm* not going.'

"'Nobody asked you, sir,' she said!'" came from the depths of the basket-chair.

'Oh, girls, girls, we must talk seriously!' moaned Mrs. Lindley, groping about for her glasses. 'Where's the letter? I must read it again.'

The letter was at that moment at the extreme end of the long deal table, in the hands of Grace, who was vigorously copying music; from there it passed into those of Maud, who was wood-carving with an energy which it was refreshing to behold; and, finally, having first been round by Maria, who was busy with a sewing-machine, and Chrissie, who was potting flowers, it returned to Mrs. Lindley's keeping, sprinkled with a mixture of chips of wood and garden-mould, and bearing upon its surface stains both of machine-oil and of ink that was a good deal fresher than that used by Mrs. Duffield.

'What is this? I had not noticed this before—something "in

confidence." That comes from you girls always opening my letters.'

'What earthly harm can that do, Mummy, considering that you would never be so wicked as to have secrets from us? And this is only to say that there are chances for pretty girls in the Ruckton neighbourhood. Surely that is a perfectly harmless commonplace. Aren't there chances for pretty girls everywhere?'

'There is more in that than meets the eye,' said Minna, the only idle one of the group. 'It isn't a commonplace at all—it's a hint.'

'A hint of what?'

'Oh, the pace at which some intellects travel! Why, a hint that no one with a squint or a hump need apply. Surely it's as clear as daylight that Aunt Alice is hankering after the beauty of the family!'

There was a pause of astonishment—this view of the case was absolutely new. Since Minna's hair was somewhat sandy and her complexion generously freckled, she could lay no claim to being the beauty, but she had always been considered the intellect, of the family. A suggestion of hers could never fail to attract attention. The consequence of this last one was that Aunt Alice's letter was once more extracted from Mrs. Lindley's faintly resisting hands, and performed a second journey round by the sewing-machine and the wood-carving, for it was necessary to see what the words looked like with this new light shed upon them.

They looked like what they were—viz., an almost unduly broad hint.

'Remains only to award the palm of beauty,' decided Minna. 'I waive my claims. To be clever *and* beautiful wouldn't be fair upon the rest of you.'

'Girls, girls,' broke in Mrs. Lindley, 'there are all sorts of things to be considered.'

'Nothing but the tints of our complexions and the colour of our hair!' cried Chrissie, silencing her with a stormy embrace. 'This is a case where all the virtues in the Catechism would not outweigh a pair of blue eyes, and where moral excellence is as though it were not.'

'As for that,' put in Maria, 'I do think it's a downright shame that mere prettiness should do it all. As if plain people didn't enjoy a lark as much as pretty ones! And what larks she'll have! An "indefinite visit" is almost the same as being adopted. I suppose Aunt Alice will even pay for her frocks!' And Maria

turned the wheel of her sewing-machine with an almost savage energy. Maria's occasional fits of rebellion against the plainness of her own looks were the nearest approach to ill-temper known within the circle of this somewhat harum-scarum, but none the less happy, family.

'This is all beside the point,' broke in Minna. 'We are frittering away our time, girls. Are you aware that the mail goes on the 16th? The great decision positively must be taken to-night.'

'Supposing we draw lots?' suggested Chrissie.

'And if the lot falls on me or on Maria—can you picture to yourself Aunt Alice's despair at the moment of unshipment? I can't. No, no: this is a problem which our own brains must work out. It isn't as hopeless as it looks at first sight. To begin with, there aren't nearly so many to choose from as you suppose. Maria and I waive our claims—don't we, Maria? Fanny and Dot have got none, since it isn't her nursery that Aunt Alice wants to replenish. Remain four candidates—Grace, Chrissie, Carrie, and Maud. I suppose there is no blinking the fact that each of them has certain claims to being considered a well-favoured young woman. How in the name of charity are we to prevent their fighting?' And Minna's good-natured freckled face beamed across the room with sisterly pride.

'Don't smother us in blushes, please,' said Chrissie, with perfect unblushingness. 'It's all a matter of taste, after all. Suppose we take votes?'

'Splendid!' agreed Maud. 'I presume it's not correct to vote for oneself, so I give my vote to Grace—she looked delicious in her new tennis flannel the other day.'

Grace looked up somewhat guiltily from the music she was copying.

'I—I am afraid I should be awfully sea-sick,' she hastened to say. 'I really think I would rather stay at home.'

'And miss all those larks, of your own free will?' replied Maria, aghast. 'What can this mean?'

'It simply means that Maud was not the only person who found that Grace looked delicious in that white flannel,' explained Minna, with a twinkle in her merry grey eyes. 'And it means that there may be more tennis and more opportunities of airing that frock.'

'Oh, I see—John Brunton!' muttered Maria to herself, as she sent her wheel spinning on its way.

'That reduces the number of the candidates to three,' went on Minna.

'I am afraid it reduces it to two,' sighed Maud. I have been struggling against the terrible secret all day, but there's no doubt now that one of my bad gum-boils is on the road. I could never sail on the 16th. There's at least a week of bread poultices in prospect.'

'Which brings us down to a duel between Chrissie and Carrie. Splendid! Surely we'll be able to make up our minds now. We'll have to look at them critically, side by side. Where's Carrie? Here she comes, in the very nick of time. Put down your tray, Carrie, and stand up beside Chrissie—there, near the window. Oh, yes, we'll taste your cakes presently—they really don't look *quite* so badly burnt as last time! Now, Mummy dear, put on your glasses and tell us which of these two young women will do most honour to the family.'

Beyond a periodical uttering of 'Girls, girls!' in a deprecatory tone of voice, Mrs. Lindley had been completely out of the latter part of the conversation. She never could grapple with her daughters *en masse*—which does not mean, however, that she was capable of doing so when encountering them singly. They were altogether too much for her, both physically and mentally. While she knew no higher ambition than to slip through life unnoticed and with as little exertion as could reasonably be hoped, these distressingly vigorous children of hers seemed not only not to avoid unnecessary fatigue, but to go miles out of their way in search of it. Hence the chaotic appearance of this large shabby room, which partook of the character of a studio, a dressmaker's establishment, and a potting-house, and in which Mrs. Lindley generally sat watching her daughters' more than mixed occupations, with an expression of countenance which irresistibly put one in mind of a hen with ducklings.

'I really cannot say that I find one of them prettier than the other,' was the verdict she now pronounced, after a long and loving stare at the couple put up for approval.

'Chrissie has got a far better colour,' said Maria decisively.

'Put that in your pipe and smoke it, Carrie my dear,' observed the young lady under examination.

'But Carrie has got far the finest eyes,' pronounced Maud.

'Are you still feeling quite comfortable, Chrissie?' asked Carrie; 'your scale's going to kick the beam presently, I can tell you.'

'She's got the *bluest* eyes, you mean,' said Chrissie. 'But it's just what I said—it's all a matter of taste. Some people find blue eyes namby-pamby.'

'And dote upon brown ones? I quite understand.'

'I suppose,' suggested Maud, 'it would scarcely do to give Aunt Alice her choice, telegraphically, between a fair and a dark niece—something in this style: "Blonde and brunette both available; please wire which preferred."'

'Girls, girls——'

'Silence!' said Minna. 'I'm going to cut the Gordian knot. Why should we not send them both?'

There was another pause of astonishment.

'But, my dear Minna, she has only asked one!'

'And she will end by having one, of course; but it will be the one of her own choice. I propose that we should send the couple over on sight. The one that's disapproved of can be returned by next mail.'

Mrs. Lindley sank back on her chair, all but annihilated by the audacity of the idea. With the rest of the company, on the contrary, the first shock having been weathered, it was exactly the idea's audacity which was its chief recommendation.

'After all, we're only half-nieces,' said Carrie, flippantly, 'and two half-nieces don't make more than one whole.'

'But how about the passage-money?' asked Maria, who was the practical one. 'It's true Aunt Alice has sent a cheque for 100*l.*—I suppose in case the selected niece hasn't a frock to travel in; but though that's very ample for one, it isn't enough for two.'

'There's a difficulty there,' said Minna; 'but we might sell the speckled cow in the meantime to help towards it, and Aunt Alice is sure to make up for it at the other end.'

'And even if she doesn't,' burst out Chrissie, 'surely such a glorious trip is worth the speckled cow, or any other sacrifice! Oh, Mummy, unless you want Carrie and me to go for each other's hair on the spot, you must say "Yes"! Now that Minna has once put the idea into my head I could not possibly stay quietly at home, and Carrie doesn't look as if she could either.' For Carrie had darted across the room, and was at that moment hanging round her 'Mummy's' neck, half laughing and half crying, in the excitement of this crisis.

Poor Mrs. Lindley had no chance against her daughters. Though she struggled a little longer, she felt from the first that he was beaten. Every objection was overruled, every scruple

silenced, every fear kindly but firmly soothed, and before ten more minutes had passed it was settled that Chrissie and Carrie should sail together on the 16th.

'You'll try not to fight on the way, won't you?' said Minna, admonishingly. 'You mustn't arrive with scratched faces, for the honour of the family.'

'We'll try not to,' said Carrie. 'It's going to be a tremendous jest. Oh, Chrissie! I wonder if we're bound to hate each other?'

'Well, at any rate, we're bound each to try and knock the other into a cocked hat—also for the honour of the family, you know.'

'The speckled cow must go to-morrow,' decided Minna; 'and now comes the question of the wardrobe. We must rig them out as best we can, and with perfect impartiality. There must be a fair field and no favour. Chrissie can have the feather off my Sunday hat, since hers was worried by the puppies last week, and it wouldn't be fair for Carrie to have a feather and she none.'

'It might be that very feather that turned out to be the proverbial one in the balance,' remarked the frivolous Carrie.

'I suppose I'll have to let one of them have my new petticoat,' said Maria, with as bad a grace as she could muster. 'Whichever of the two has got the shabbiest petticoat can take this one. I've put in the last stitch this minute, and I'll just have to make another when they're gone. That comes of being plain. The chosen one of the two will probably never have to make another petticoat for herself; and oh, just fancy the delight of not having to wear turned frocks!'

Chrissie and Carrie looked at each other with bated breath. Neither spoke, but in both the blue and the brown eyes was clearly to be read, 'Which, oh! which will it be?'

CHAPTER III.

'THERE are the wheels at last!'

It was Mrs. Duffield who spoke, and, for a wonder, it was Mr. Duffield to whom she said it. In the ordinary course of normal existence Henry's study was a sanctuary not invaded by his wife; but this was not a day of normal existence—it was the day on which the Australian niece was expected. The carriage had gone to the station an hour ago, and rather than face the time of sus-

pense in solitude, Mrs. Duffield had elected to beard her husband in his den.

‘There are the wheels at last!’

Mrs. Duffield’s first natural instinct was to hurry towards the door. She had all but reached it when she stopped short, as though struck by a shot. A terrible idea had skimmed across her mind.

‘Henry,’ she said, in a whisper that was almost awestruck, ‘supposing she should be stumpy!’

Somehow this terrible contingency had not before presented itself to her mind—it was the critical nature of the moment to which the thought owed its birth.

‘I don’t care what she is so long as she doesn’t talk to me,’ growled Henry, with his nose between his papers.

‘I should like her to be pretty, of course, but it is really not the face that is the crucial thing—it is the figure. I don’t know what trial I would not rather bear than go into a room with a stumpy girl behind me.’

There was no further reply from Henry, and Mrs. Duffield, bracing herself with an effort, went off, in a somewhat subdued state of mind, to see what fate had in store for her.

Mr. Duffield, left to himself, put down his nose a little deeper among his papers, becoming at the same time aware, very much to his annoyance, that he had lost the train of thought which he had so laboriously been pursuing all day. Twist his conclusions about as he might, the question as to whether life was worth living could not at this moment save itself from being just a little bit jostled aside by the question as to what this new Australian niece who was to take Adela’s place would be like. It was most provoking to be thus reminded of being human, and just at a moment, too, when, after much labour of brain, he had at last got upon the track of the idea that human beings were nothing more than an elaborate mistake.

Presently there was a sweep of skirts in the passage, and Mrs. Duffield, entering breathless, threw herself, groaning, into the nearest arm-chair.

‘What is it? Is she stumpy?’ asked Mr. Duffield, instead of objecting to the intrusion.

‘*She!*’ echoed Mrs. Duffield wildly. ‘Oh, Henry, it is *they!* There are two of them!’

‘Two of them!’ Mr. Duffield was this time seriously aghast. ‘Is this a joke, Alice?’ he sternly inquired.

At this Mrs. Duffield collected her faculties and explained as best she could.

'It seems that they wanted to send me the prettiest of them; somehow they had made out from my letter that I don't enjoy taking about plain girls, and they couldn't make up their minds which of these two was the prettier.'

'Well—and can you?'

'I? Good gracious! no; I haven't even properly disentangled them. One seems to be dark and the other fair. It's a mercy, at least, that neither of them is stumpy.' And Mrs. Duffield heaved a sigh of heartfelt relief. 'But I must say I think it is most inconsiderate of Henrietta.'

'Inconsiderate? It's a piece of barefaced calculation—a clear case of giving the little finger and taking the whole hand. If we take one daughter off her hands, why not two? That's her little game. But she's reckoned without her host this time. I dare say you were surprised at my consenting so easily to your harebrained plan; but I knew what I was about. So long as there was only one girl, you two would keep each other quiet; but, the moment there are two, there is always the danger of one being left on my hands; and what on earth would then become of all my trains of thought, I should like to know? Ha! You must make up your mind at once which of the two you want.'

'But, Henry, I cannot decide by candle-light. You must let me look at them by daylight first.'

And so it was agreed that daylight should decide.

But, alas! when daylight came Mrs. Duffield's perplexity was greater than ever. There could be no doubt at all that both her nieces were more than commonly good-looking—it was, as had been said, entirely a matter of taste. The girls themselves seemed quite to see her difficulty, and did all that lay in their power to help her to a conclusion.

'You see, Aunt Alice,' Chrissie said to her after breakfast on that first morning, 'so much depends upon what you exactly expect. Carrie and I are very different in some ways. Perhaps it would help you if I gave you a list of our respective good points. I'm the eldest, and I suppose it's my place, and I'll do it quite honestly, too, for I don't want to be kept on false pretences. Besides, Carrie is here, and can speak up if she thinks I'm under-colouring her. Well, as for our outsides, we're pretty much of a size, but you can see for yourself that my hair is brown and Carrie's fair. Everything else about us is just about as different.

I'm the outdoor one, you might say, and she the indoor one. Horses and dogs and gardening for me—I'll pot your flowers for you, by the bye, if you like—and for Carrie, tea parties and conversation and society in general.'

'But I can also bake cakes,' interposed Carrie. 'You mustn't let Aunt Alice suppose that I am all frivolous. I can bake very nice cakes—only sometimes they are burnt,' she added sincerely.

'And as for other accomplishments,' went on Chrissie—'let me see, what is there? Carrie can sing rather well, though she never learnt properly, and I have got a rather good seat on horseback; then we both play tennis, not badly; and then—well, I don't know if there is anything else. Our tempers, I think I may say, are both good, and I suppose we are both what you would call lively. At any rate, we don't belong to the slow sort.'

'No, I am sure you don't,' said Mrs. Duffield under her breath.

'Perhaps I'm the livelier of the two. What do you think, Carrie?'

'I don't think there's a pin to choose between us there,' pronounced Carrie.

'I really believe that's about all. Well, Aunt Alice, has that helped you to make up your mind?'

'I—I can't say it has,' stammered Mrs. Duffield in painful perplexity.

'They have both got good points,' she subsequently explained to Harry, 'but, at any rate, I should have to see them dressed for dinner before I decide. So much depends upon the way in which a girl puts on her things, you know.'

Henry said nothing, but gave one of his comprehensive grunts and buried his hands a little deeper in his pockets.

'There are a few people coming to dinner to-night,' Mrs. Duffield said in the course of the forenoon, 'but I am afraid you will not find it very lively.'

'Why not?' asked Chrissie encouragingly. 'We generally find most things pretty lively, thank you, Aunt Alice.'

'Yes, but, my poor children, you cannot, after all, do all the talking yourselves, and, unless I am much mistaken, you will find the two young men who are coming to-night very taciturn.'

The faces of Chrissie and Carrie fell a little.

'Are there no talkative young men at all in the neighbourhood, Aunt Alice?'

Mrs. Duffield fidgeted on her chair.

'Not many just at present, to tell the truth. And, in any case,

I have certain obligations towards these two, especially towards George Ingram. He has really not been quite himself since Adela's marriage, and I don't mind telling you that I had hoped——'

'Oh! so they are victims of Adela?' observed Carrie, her eyes dancing mischievously.

'And we are expected to cheer them up?' inquired Chrissie in a tone of some disgust.

'Not *expected* to do anything: but it would be an act of Christian charity to get them to talk. George Ingram has had such gloomy fits lately that positively I have felt quite nervous about letting him out of my sight. He is just the sort of man to do something desperate.'

When Chrissie came down that evening, dressed for dinner in a white muslin, made in the fashion of two years back and not yet recovered from the creases of the voyage, she found the drawing-room in possession of two men who were obviously taking great pains to place the length of the apartment between them. These proved to be Mr. Ingram and Mr. Allan: the former a good-looking but gloomy individual in the thirties, the latter belonging to the 'broken lily' type of youth, with a sensitive mouth and a mournful gaze. Inasmuch as they had both been mortally stricken by the fair Adela, Mr. Ingram and Mr. Allan possessed a point of resemblance; but, whereas the one took a sort of affectionate interest in his broken heart, keeping alive his love-sorrow with something that was almost a melancholy pleasure, the other's grief took the shape of a universal and badly suppressed rage, directed towards his fellow-creatures indiscriminately.

'You have robbed me of her!' his gloomy gaze seemed to say to every mortal on whom it chanced to fall.

'Adela must be very pretty,' Chrissie wrote in her first letter home; 'she has left her path strewn with rejected lovers—which is rather awkward for her successors.'

This first evening was one of intense agitation for Mrs. Duffield. 'There can be no doubt,' she reflected, while she was eating her soup, 'that Chrissie talks better than Carrie; she has actually got George Ingram's tongue loosened; I am not quite sure that I haven't seen him smile once.'

Then, while helping herself to fish, Carrie's profile, with its crown of silky fair hair, chanced to present itself at an angle which was peculiarly fascinating, and straightway Mrs. Duffield's

ideas became troubled. That hair unquestionably represented a trump-card in the social world—to what glorious advantage might it not be displayed! Mrs. Duffield's fingers were itching to be at it.

The balance between the two sisters hung at a provokingly even angle. Somewhere about the roast it was Chrissie who was first in the running; somewhere about the ices it was Carrie who had the better chance. On the whole, indeed, it may be said that Carrie carried off the honours of the evening, for not only was there the wonderful hair, but there was a distinctly charming voice, which, soon after dinner, electrified the drawing-room in general and Mr. Allan in particular; this last-mentioned gentleman actually reviving from his part of broken lily sufficiently to turn over the music pages.

'Neither the Potter nor the Brandon girls are fit to be heard in the same room with her,' was Mrs. Duffield's reflection, as she sat listening and swelling with *quasi*-maternal pride.

'I think it's *you* who will go back to Australia,' Carrie confided exultingly to Chrissie, together with the good-night kiss of that first day.

'Do you still think it is I who am going back to Australia?' inquired Chrissie next morning, having dismounted, with glowing cheeks, from an early canter in the park, during which various of the fences had been most successfully experimented upon. 'Aunt Alice has been watching me from the drawing-room window all the time.'

Carrie made a grimace and shrugged her shoulders.

'It's my own private opinion that Aunt Alice will never make up her mind.'

Which was very much what Aunt Alice herself said when interrogated on the subject after breakfast.

'Not come to a conclusion yet?' fumed Henry. 'What more are you waiting for? You have looked at them by daylight and by candle-light: is there any other sort of light to which you wish to submit them?'

'It is not the light, Henry; but you must surely see that neither of them is properly rested after the journey. How can I judge of them so long as they have scarcely got over their sea-sickness? It would take at least a fortnight to be quite sure that they were looking their usual selves. At the end of that time you may depend upon it that I shall be ready to ship one of them back to Australia.'

The tussle was a tough one, but Mrs. Duffield carried her point in the end—as, in fact, she generally did, all her tremors notwithstanding.

And now there began for this devoted woman a time of the most exquisite torture. Fifty times a day during the week that followed did she change her mind from Chrissie to Carrie, and from Carrie back again to Chrissie.

The chances of each were so good that there seemed no prospect of one outdoing the other. Their aunt watched them with a sort of mild despair, for ever hoping to detect in one or the other some quality, either especially desirable or especially the reverse, which would cause either of the scales to sink or to rise.

The first trial fortnight came to an uneventful end so far as this much-tormented lady's state of mind was concerned. When Mr. Duffield said, 'Well, I suppose they are rested by this time?' she looked at him, at first helplessly.

'Henry,' she began after a minute, 'I see that I have made a mistake.'

'I am glad you do.'

'What I mean is, that I see it was foolish of me to suppose that I could decide upon either of the girls so long as I have not seen them among other girls in society; I don't count those few small dinners we have had. It has just occurred to me that both the Potters and the Brandons are going to have tennis-parties next week, and I am quite sure that they would positively be grateful to me for bringing them two such capital players.'

'Which, in plain unvarnished English, means that the period of probation is to be prolonged?'

Mr. Duffield growled and grunted, and talked about his trains of thought, but the result of this conversation was that a second fortnight's trial was, with a very bad grace, acquiesced in.

Meanwhile both Chrissie and Carrie were thoroughly enjoying their time of trial, wisely refraining from looking at the morrow so long as the day was theirs. It was quite remarkable how, in spite of the moroseness of the master of the house, people now took to dropping in to tea and even to luncheon, just as they had been used to do in Adela's time.

Then there were the tennis-parties, which could not have been more delightful than they were. 'And Mr. Ingram plays almost well,' asserted Chrissie; 'at any rate, much better than I should have expected from his look.'

'It is such a comfort to me to see him with his racket in his hand again,' replied Mrs. Duffield. 'He had quite given up tennis since Adela's marriage. Did he make any reference to her yesterday at the Brandons, by the bye? I saw him talking to you after tea.'

'No, I can't say that he did talk about Adela,' said Chrissie demurely.

'You really are a good girl, Chrissie, to let yourself be fastened upon in that way. The poor man has been looking almost a little calmer lately. No doubt he has discovered some traces of a family resemblance (and you really have got a look of Adela in some lights), and his wounded heart is soothed by dreaming itself back at Adela's side. I am beginning to hope that the catastrophe which for months past I have been fearfully looking for will, after all, be averted.'

'Let us hope so,' said Carrie gravely.

It was after the second tennis-party that Mrs. Duffield, reaching home in a state of badly suppressed agitation, started off straight for Henry's study. Halfway along the passage she ran against Henry himself, who for the last hour or more had been listening for the carriage-wheels.

'Come in here, Alice,' he began, without waiting for her to speak. 'I must talk to you seriously; there positively must be an end of this. My patience in this matter has filled myself with astonishment, but it has reached its limits at last. I have been having a terrible day of it—a quite indescribable day. I got up this morning with the germ of an idea in my mind; after months of labour I believed I had got on to the track of the answer to the question, "Why exist?" But scarcely had I sat down to work when I became aware that my head was buzzing full of the song which that girl sang last night; not by any manner of means could I get it disentangled from my trains of thought. Then, when I start off for a turn in the open air, in hopes of recovering myself, where does bad luck lead me but right up against the other girl, who is making some mess with flower-pots in an outhouse, and who naturally begins to talk sixteen to the dozen, with the result that before five minutes are past I have completely lost all clue to the reason of my existence? Back I fly to my study, and have been at work ever since—no use! Torture myself as I may, I cannot hit back again upon the track of that idea. That is why I say there must be

an end of this. Before another sun has set you must make up your mind which of the two girls you want.'

Mrs. Duffield had sunk into a chair and untied her bonnet-strings.

'Henry,' she gasped, a little short of breath, 'I was coming in here to make you a proposition. Listen to me, I beg of you; I believe this will decide matters. I have just heard that there is to be a ball at the races—a county ball; it is being got up in a hurry, and nothing could be more providential for me. Oh, Henry, it is the very thing I want! The tennis-parties have not helped me to make up my mind in the way I hoped they would. Everybody seems to approve of them both equally, and they both play despairingly well. But a ball is quite a different thing; one is sure to dance better than the other, and to look better in her ball-dress, and altogether to be more of a success. Oh, Henry, if you love me a little, let me have this one more test! It is only a question of ten days!'

Mr. Duffield came to a standstill before his wife, and glared down at her, his hands deep in his pockets.

'Do you solemnly promise to make your choice on the very morrow of this confounded ball?'

'I solemnly promise.'

'So be it, then. And now not another word on the subject, if you please.'

It would be hard to say whether it was Mrs. Duffield or Chrissie and Carrie whose thoughts were fixed with the most tremulous expectation on the ball in prospect. The idea of appearing in the field of battle with two pretty nieces in tow was exactly the one to warm the innermost cockles of this lady's heart. 'They will have to be dressed,' she said to herself, and, as the thought stirred within her mind, her eye lighted up and her nostril dilated, as does that of the war-horse at sound of the trumpet.

CHAPTER IV.

NEITHER Chrissie nor Carrie had ever before been at a real big dance—such an article as a ball-room not being within reach of the comparatively lonely farm on which they had grown up; but, fortunately for their success on the critical evening, waltzing had been assiduously cultivated in the family-circle itself. Though

nervousness was foreign to their nature, a pleasant sense of bewilderment took possession of them at the moment of their entrance. Everything they saw was new and interesting, and it never even occurred to them to conceal, or ever so lightly to veil, the frank astonishment and overflowing delight which completely possessed them. The natural result was that they themselves unwittingly became by far the most interesting objects put up to view. Mrs. Duffield had not been half an hour in the room before she began to recognise that the decision which she had looked to the course of this evening to clinch was going to become more perplexing than ever. In their dresses of ivory-coloured gauze, relieved by great bunches of dark-red roses, there was no fault to be found with either one or the other. Perhaps the red roses showed up best in Chrissie's dark hair: but then, again, with what exquisite delicacy did the tint of Carrie's arms and shoulders appear to melt into that of the gauze! In vain did Mrs. Duffield attempt to feel the pulse of public opinion: there was no pronounced verdict to be read out of the compliments which poured in on all sides. The 'Australians' were unquestionably the 'queens' of the ball; but they were, in the truest sense of the word, twin-queens, placed side by side on one throne, crowned with one and the same crown.

'I am so pleased that you think my nieces pretty,' said Mrs. Duffield at last, with a movement of despair, in reply to the speech of an old friend; 'but how is it that it is always "the Australians" in the plural? They are not so very like each other, after all, and I cannot get anybody to tell me which they think deserves the palm.'

'You certainly will not get me to do so,' answered old Colonel Thomson. 'For one thing, I disagree with you about their not being alike: I think they are as like as two peas—not in the colour of their hair, perhaps, but in that happy look on their faces. To see anyone enjoying themselves in that—I should like to call it—breakneck fashion makes one feel quite twenty years younger. It's *that* that has fetched me—their *look*, not their *looks*; if you want a verdict upon those you must go to younger authorities. Their ball-cards would be the best thermometers I can suggest.'

Grasping at this hint, Mrs. Duffield took the earliest opportunity of casting a glance respectively over Chrissie's and Carrie's ball-cards; it was not much more than a glance, however, after which the cards were handed back in silence, and with, if possible,

a deepening of the feeling of despair in Mrs. Duffield's heart. On neither one card nor the other was there so much as a nook left wherein a dancer with ever so compact a handwriting, and ever so brief a name, could have taken refuge. Mrs. Duffield was, therefore, exactly as wise as she had been before she had acted on Colonel Thomson's hint.

There was, indeed, one marked difference between the two cards, which, had she been a few shades calmer, Mrs. Duffield might have observed; for, though both cards were full, it was a remarkable fact that that of Chrissie was very much more filled up with the name of 'Ingram,' while that of Carrie displayed the name of 'Allan' with a somewhat suspicious frequency. Even had she made the observation, it is doubtful whether it would have conveyed any meaning to her; for both Ingram and Allan had for so long stood in her mind as the designations of two of the most conspicuous among Adela's victims that it never would have occurred to her to view them as anything else. But, as has already been said, Mrs. Duffield's nerves were not in a condition to enable her to note such details as this. Not even in the days of Adela's glory had she tasted the triumphs of chaperonage as fully as she tasted them to-night; but neither had she ever before undergone such agonies of indecision.

She was a good deal more exhausted, though not one shade clearer as to her own state of mind, when, in the early grey light which precedes the dawn, the three ball-goers alighted at the hall-door of Ruckton. It was the dawn of the day on which she had pledged herself to make her choice. And this time Henry would put up with no more nonsense—she knew that, alas! too well. This thought was painfully present to her mind as she laid her weary head to rest. Alert as an imp of evil, it sat on her pillow and warded off the approach of sleep. "Chrissie or Carrie? Carrie or Chrissie?" The question buzzed in her head with a maddening persistency, and, meanwhile, distant doors began to open and to shut, and the bands of daylight which showed between the shutters grew broader and more vivid. It was not until a strip of intense yellow light had fallen across the carpet that Mrs. Duffield fell into deep sleep.

When she opened her eyes the strip of light had not grown more yellow, but it had shifted to the dressing-table. With a start of surprise she glanced at her watch—close to one o'clock: such a thing was unheard of. And this was the momentous day, and half of it thus slipped from between her fingers! 'Chrissie

or Carrie? Carrie or Chrissie?' Mrs. Duffield's eyes were scarcely open when already the question had pounced back upon her, like some beast of prey which has been lying in wait during the hours of slumber.

She got up and dressed hastily. Of course she must appear at luncheon, but before she appeared her decision must have been arrived at; Henry would certainly open the subject the moment they left the dining-room.

Perhaps it was a certain repose of nerves, gained by bodily rest, which helped Mrs. Duffield to see all at once, as in a revelation, that all this weighing and measuring of the subject was useless self-torture, that, of her own free will, she never would be able to make her choice, not even if her two nieces were kept on sight for another three months, or, for the matter of that, another three years. Since, nevertheless, a choice had to be made, was it not the only sensible plan to leave it to fate?

The thought had scarcely dawned in her mind when she embraced it eagerly, though with a strange pang of fear which it would have been difficult logically to explain. The matter was quite simple: whichever of the girls she happened to meet first she would regard as destined by fate for the return to Australia; the other should become the adopted daughter.

'And, in order to put an end to all further doubts,' reflected Mrs. Duffield, 'I will open the subject with her immediately, and tell her to begin her preparations. I hope to heaven I shall not meet them together, because in that case—good gracious! there is some one knocking!'

Mrs. Duffield distinctly felt herself turn pale as she sank into the nearest chair, steadying herself by its arms.

There was a pause of more than a minute before she managed to utter:

'Come in.'

Chrissie, opening the door, and entering with a peculiarly bright smile playing about her lips, looked at her aunt in some surprise.

'Are you ill, Aunt Alice?' she inquired earnestly. 'You look so agitated.'

'No—that is to say—I mean—is that you, Chrissie? It is a good thing you have come—I have something to say to you.'

'Well, Aunt Alice, I am listening.'

'I suppose I had better tell you at once,' began Mrs. Duffield, moulding her handkerchief into a lump. 'You see, there are

various reasons why I cannot keep you both here for any length of time; it is no use going into details, but I told Henrietta from the first that I could only manage with one. I am not exaggerating when I say that you have both gained my heart, and yet I am driven to making my choice. I have had great difficulty in doing so, but it has occurred to me that it would be a pity to let Carrie's voice rust away out there, instead of being cultivated by London masters; and so, though it is very difficult for me to say so, I thought I had better tell you——'

'That I am to be shipped back to Australia?' asked Chrissie; but, strangely enough, there was neither disappointment nor chagrin to be seen upon her face. The peculiarly bright smile continued to play, undimmed, about her lips.

'Yes: I am afraid it will have to be that,' finished Mrs. Duffield, almost in tears.

'Don't agitate yourself, Aunt Alice,' said Chrissie reassuringly. 'I don't think it will have to be that at all.'

'But, my dear child——'

'Wait a minute. You have had your say, and now it is I who am going to have mine. I came here to tell you: I couldn't do it comfortably last night, or rather this morning; but now I don't want to put it off. I have something to announce to you, Aunt Alice. Mr. Ingram has——'

'Not shot himself!' screamed Mrs. Duffield, starting from her chair and closing her fingers over Chrissie's wrist. 'I always said that he would do something desperate.'

'Well, as to its being something desperate,' said Chrissie, gently releasing herself, 'I suppose that is a matter of opinion; but, at any rate——'

'Oh, tell me that he has not shot himself!'

'No: he has not shot himself; he has done something completely different.'

'Surely not—poison?' said Mrs. Duffield, in an awe-struck whisper.

'No, not poison; something still more different. He has asked me to be his wife!'

For a moment Mrs. Duffield continued to stare at her niece with meaningless eyes, then she staggered back to her chair and sank into it with a gasp.

'George Ingram,' she succeeded at last in murmuring, 'asked you—his wife; but I thought it was Adela—it never

even occurred to me—and, dear me, what has become of his broken heart?’

‘It has got mended, Aunt Alice,’ cried Chrissie, with a great burst of delight. ‘Don’t you see? It *was* Adela, but it *is* me: the matter is really quite simple.’

With Chrissie’s arms round her neck and Chrissie’s head on her shoulder, it did not take Mrs. Duffield long to realise the perfect simplicity of the matter; and, the first shock of surprise once over, she was conscious of nothing but a feeling of intense relief. Here was an entirely unlooked-for and universally satisfactory solution of the difficulty; for, of course, Carrie became from this moment marked by fate as the adopted daughter of the future.

‘Of course, there can be no question now of going back to Australia,’ she joyfully explained to Chrissie. ‘Henry cannot fail to see the force of this argument. You must marry from this house. Does Carrie know the news?’

‘Not yet, Aunt Alice; I wanted to tell you first, and, besides——’

‘We must tell her now; where is she?’

‘In the flower-garden.’

‘Let us go and find her before luncheon.’

Mrs. Duffield made an attempt to rise, but Chrissie showed no inclination to move.

‘I rather think that Carrie doesn’t want us just now, Aunt Alice.’

‘Not want us! Why not?’

‘Because she is not alone in the flower-garden.’

‘Who is with her?’

‘Mr. Allan is with her,’ said Chrissie, with a slight twitch about the corners of her lips.

Mrs. Duffield sank back again into her chair, and looked expectantly at her niece. It did not take her so long to understand the second time as it had taken her the first time. If the event just broken to her was possible, nothing else could be impossible. And, now that she came to think of it, both these young men had been very constant visitors lately.

‘Do you mean anything?’ she asked, with forced calmness.

‘I mean that I think Mr. Allan meant to come to the point last night, but, as he hadn’t a convenient opportunity of doing so, and as he is averse to unnecessary delay, he has taken advantage of the general invitation to drop in to luncheon which you gave him the other day.’

'And you think Carrie will say "Yes"?'

'I don't think so—I *know* she will. That broken lily never could have straightened up in the way he has done during the last weeks if he had not read hope very plainly written in Carrie's blue eyes.'

Mrs. Duffield sat still for a minute, reflecting, then threw up her hands with a gesture which seemed to say that she gave up attempting to understand men. The same moment a new thought struck her.

'And I!' she cried, turning to Chrissie with a ring of despair in her voice. 'What is to become of me? Whom am I to chaperone? If you both go and get married, there I am back again at the old turn in the road!'

Chrissie smiled a very happy smile as she laid her cheek against Aunt Alice's shoulder.

'There are six more of us,' she said softly; 'is there any reason why you should not send out for a fresh assortment on sight?'

DOROTHEA GERARD.

The Sea's Finny Nurslings.

THERE are land-babies—then why not water-babies?’ said Charles Kingsley. ‘Are there not water-rats, water-flies, water-crickets, water-crabs, water-tortoises, water-scorpions, water-tigers and water-hogs, water-cats and water-dogs, sea-lions and sea-bears, sea-horses and sea-elephants, sea-mice and sea-urchins, sea-razors and sea-pens, sea-combs and sea-fans?’ Yes, there are water-babies, we now know, far more wonderful and infinitely more numerous than the naturalists of Kingsley’s day ever dreamed of. That the waters of the sea should at certain seasons be peopled by minute creatures, largely the young fry of our most valuable and familiar food-fishes, is a fact of which scientific men have only recently been made aware. It is truly astonishing that for so long the early life-history of the cod, haddock, sole, and other species esteemed for table purposes, should have been shrouded in complete mystery. ‘We want to know,’ Frank Buckland was accustomed somewhat petulantly to urge, ‘the times and places of the spawning of sea-fish. Where do the soles lay their eggs? When and how do the plaice, turbot, brill, and halibut spawn? Do cod’s eggs sink or swim? What are the form and dimensions of the young sole just hatched from the egg?’ And upon all these questions nothing could be said. Conjectures, it is true, were not wanting; but like so many prophecies, more recent and more reliable knowledge has not verified them. Conjecture and common opinion have, indeed, proved to be sadly astray. The naturalist knew that the finny tribes in the sea were amazingly prolific—the anatomical study of ripe fish sufficiently showed that—but what became of the eggs, and in what localities the young fry spent their early days no one could tell. Happily, recent researches have given us the desired information.

The majority of marine fishes used for food, Professor McIntosh, the eminent zoologist, has told us, ‘produce minute eggs, as transparent as crystal, which float freely throughout the water.’ From

these minute eggs strange little larvæ emerge into the upper waters of the sea, where the genial influences of the sun's light and heat are most potent. There the young fry pass the early days of their life. This fact, now well-established, is quite contrary to the notions prevalent in the past. The floor of the ocean was generally looked upon as the great spawning-ground, and certain beds were imagined, to be paved with fishes' eggs, much as 'a certain place' is said to be paved with good intentions. But the nursery of the sea is no more at the bottom than the 'den' of our own little folk is in the basement of a modern dwelling. The upper story in both cases is the region where the happy hours of infancy, human and piscine alike, are spent. The lower region is appropriately tenanted by menials and scavengers, lurking and unseen, it may be, but indispensable and useful, it cannot be denied. The herring, we know, places its eggs on the bottom of the sea. It is one of the few fishes of commercial value which do so. But the herring-fry, on hatching out, at once mount upward, as though anxious to join the company of their more fortunate kindred privileged to be born in the bright upper waters. Fishermen at times bring up on their hooks, or entangled in their lines, fragments of herring-spawn—a fact which has led, and quite naturally, to the belief that all the food-fishes place their eggs likewise on the floor of the sea.

Many writers upon natural history, in ignorance of the real facts, have plainly asserted that the whiting, the haddock, and other fishes approach the shore in spring to deposit their ova upon seaweeds and the like. It is not, therefore, surprising that fishermen, who usually disown all scientific pretensions, should adopt similar views. One Scottish fisherman, indeed, solemnly assured the Royal Commission on Trawling, which sat some seven or eight years ago, that he had obtained the eggs of the haddock, having procured them inside the shells of molluscs, and hatched the young fry therefrom. They must have been the eggs of some small shore fish such as the goby. Pennant, amongst other similar statements, seriously declared his belief that the ling—not the least excellent of edible fishes—frequented the mouths of rivers like the Tees in order to place its eggs in the mud. Pennant, no doubt, had derived his information from fishermen; but all such statements are neither more nor less than products of the imagination. So deeply rooted, indeed, are such ideas, that the observation of Professor G. O. Sars, who found the eggs of the cod and gurnard near the surface of the sea in Norway, has been generally ignored.

It is not too much to say that those who are most intimately associated with the fishing industry have little notion that the eggs of the whiting, sole and other flat fishes, the ling, haddock and cod, are extremely light, and will not sink when in the living and healthy condition. Even that assiduous naturalist, Frank Buckland, had no conception that our most valuable marine fishes deposit their floating eggs near the surface of the sea. To the Chinese, however, the fact has long been familiar that some fish-spawn swims in the form of floating jelly. The Celestials for ages have collected this, and have been accustomed to keep it in vessels until the young fish emerged. To increase the temperature of the water, and thus hasten development, heat was applied to the tanks, and a complicated system of pisciculture successfully carried out. Only a few of our British fishes produce jelly-like spawn, the angler-fish (*Lophius piscatorius*), for example, doing so. The angler's eggs float in a massive ribbon resembling a band of floating crape, often ten to twelve yards in length and six to nine inches broad. The floating eggs of our food-fishes are, however, of a different character, for the most part. They occur, as already stated, in the form of minute transparent globes, as delicate and buoyant as microscopic soap-bubbles. In the sea such eggs behave precisely as soap-bubbles do in the air: they float upward, and are borne about hither and thither, being at the mercy of every current, and hurried by the varying streams around. In a very calm sea these delicate egg-globes loosely congregate together; but when the water is agitated, or a strong current is encountered, they dance freely about, and may be driven far and wide through the upper and mid waters of the sea. Their constant tendency, it has been observed, is to ascend towards the surface. What a wonderful device this provision, so long unsuspected, really is! It saves them from the many dangers to which fixed objects at the bottom are exposed. It brings them under the genial influence of solar light and heat; and by reason of their minute size and transparency they escape a multitude of perils. They readily elude the searching eyes of myriads of aquatic enemies on account of their minuteness—a score of them placed in a row barely extend over a linear inch—while their buoyancy lifts them far out of the reach of the hungry tribes that prowl along the bed of the sea. It is true that there are hosts of creatures in the sea against which neither their microscopic size nor their transparency is much protection; but to the unaided eye of man they are perfectly invisible when floating in the sea.

Having no means of active locomotion, they are helplessly carried wherever the fortuitous currents may go; though probably they are not borne, as a rule, very far beyond certain extensive areas frequented by the parent fish at the spawning-period. This spawning-period varies in different species; but important fishes, like the cod, haddock, and whiting, usually cast their eggs about the close of the year and during the spring months.

In course of time—ten to fifteen days in many common forms—the little baby fish is fully formed within the egg, and soon is ready to emerge. If the weather be very cold, the period of development may be prolonged; but the approach of the hatching-stage is usually intimated by the continual movements of the imprisoned embryo, impatient apparently to enter upon its free life in the external world of waters. All the changes undergone by the developing fish may be observed without difficulty by means of a powerful lens, and, if an appropriate specimen be secured, the observer may be fortunate enough to behold the little fish burst its prison bounds. At the point of the thin transparent shell, where the tail of the fish lies, a gaping opening usually appears, and through it that delicate member is pushed out like a long, glassy oar. After the tail, the body, with a huge ball of yolk hanging from the under side, follows, and lastly the tiny, blunt head protrudes, 'like the head of a bulldog,' as a fisherman once aptly described it. Sometimes the head with its enormous staring eyes is pushed out first of all; while, at other times, the head and body are free; but the large head remains enclosed. Despite all the struggles of the young fish—and they are often desperate enough during the hatching process—the head may continue enclosed in its glassy helmet, and the unfortunate baby fish bravely swims about, as pathetic a spectacle as the Man in the Iron Mask. Should it be so fortunate as to become completely liberated, its capers in the water are as rapturous as the gambols of a lamb. It has aspirations which cannot be checked. Ceaselessly it wriggles upward, and then sinks quietly down again, only to renew time after time the ascending movement. There is no monotony in its actions, for now it may be seen plunging forward by a series of jerks in a horizontal direction, now it spins round in spiral fashion, and only when tired of these varied evolutions does it lie extended and inactive, swaying about in the eddying water. If our little whiting or haddock succeed in reaching the surface, it wriggles around in endless circles, or wanders aimlessly from one spot to another. No Ariadne makes her advent to help this wandering

newborn Theseus. But though the sea be wide, it cannot stray far from all companionship: countless millions of newly hatched brethren are swimming on every side, and the surface of the water often appears to be quite alive with them.

The young of most of our food-fishes enter upon life very much in this way. They are all, moreover, shaped after a similar fashion, for a mode of existence that is practically identical. All alike are very rudimentary creatures during their early days. Even the trained eye can, as a rule, detect no mouth—the mouth, like the eyes of the young kitten, being closed for some time—and the little fish feeds by slowly absorbing its stock of food-yolk. The brain, gills, liver, and other organs, so necessary to the adult fish, are either unformed or in a very immature condition; even the backbone is not a true backbone at this time, but appears merely as an elastic rod, called the notochord, the primitive representative of the bony vertebral column. The newly hatched salmon appeared to Frank Buckland to be one of the most amazing objects that could be presented to human eyes. ‘Get out your microscope,’ he said, ‘and place a newborn salmon under a low power, and you shall see one of the most beautiful sights ever beheld.’ But Frank Buckland never saw a newborn whiting, and did not dream that the sea abounded every year with young fishes infinitely more delicate and beautiful than the stout and somewhat coarsely organised young of the salmon. Compared with the salmon, the whiting just hatched is as a seraph to a rude rustic. The outline of the minute whiting is so indescribably delicate, its contour so graceful, and its transparency so perfect, that the ruddy and ‘rough-hewn’ salmon falls incomparably below it for beauty and elegance. The transparent skin of the whiting is dotted with vivid spots of canary-yellow, either in the form of stars or round buttons. These coloured corpuscles are not confined to the trunk and tail of the young fish, as we find to be the case with the cod, haddock, and some flat fishes, but extend over the broad embryonic membrane, which stands erect upon the back, and the globular yolk-sac, hanging from the under surface of the body. A brilliant little being it is in its first dress, bespangled with yellow stars; but a little later it is even more gay, for in the midst of the yellow minute points of black begin to appear, and these increase in number and size until they form quite a complicated pattern upon the body and tail. Every organ can be seen distinctly in the crystalline creature, the pulsating heart being especially noticeable by its rapid motions. ‘You see,’ said Mr.

Buckland, referring to the heart of the baby salmon—'you see the blood at one instant in one cavity of the heart (where it appears like a red speck), at the next instant it is at the other side of the heart; and so it goes on day and night, never ceasing, never tired, a great forcing-pump, propelling the blood to all parts of the body, and gradually building up the frame of a future king of fishes.' Truly a wonderful spectacle! but in many respects far less wonderful than that which is presented by the little whiting. The heart of the whiting may be seen through the glassy walls of the body like a bag of filmy lace, quite in contrast to the strong membranous organ of the young salmon. Surely the most ethereal of fabled elves never had a heart of more exquisite delicacy, or pulsating with throbs more gentle and faint? No ruddy stream of blood pours through the fragile organ, for the tissues of the young whiting appear to be bathed and nourished, at this early period, by an invisible fluid—'an unpigmented ichor,' to adopt the phrase of the older anatomists—and it is without colour or corpuscles. The most refined blush is impossible to the little whiting. It is too frail and delicate to bear even such a strain! The salmon two days old is said to weigh about two grains, but the young whiting reaches barely a minute fraction of that. It is nothing less than a marvel that, from a creature so small as the newly-hatched salmon, a mature fish will ultimately develop weighing, it may be, no less than thirty or forty pounds. How much more wonderful, then, the fact that a minute whiting, cod, or haddock should grow to the dimensions so much prized by the fishmonger! The salmon reaches a considerable size in very few years, increasing its infantile weight at least two hundred times in reaching the mature condition. But a cod develops from an embryo so small as to be little more than visible to the naked eye, and merely a fraction of a grain in weight; yet it may become a fish weighing fifty pounds, or even more, for many are caught of over sixty pounds weight. Such large examples are probably half a million times heavier than they were at birth! A human infant, to grow at the same rate, would rival the Monument by the time he reached manhood! The whiting may reach a size much larger than that usually seen in the fishmonger's shop; the haddock, too, especially those from the coast of Iceland, may sometimes be caught over two feet in length; but the cod is notoriously of ponderous character, 'they're as big as donkeys' being a common expression in the mouths of fishermen when bringing their spoils into port. Whiting on an average

rarely exceed two pounds weight, and a haddock of four or five pounds is considered to be of unusual size in British seas.

The young embryo after leaving the egg depends for nutriment upon its bag of yolk, and, as it is devoid of a mouth, no other source of nourishment is available. Hence its growth is not very rapid. During this early period of its free existence it is a quaint little being, and can only be properly seen when placed under a microscope. From the back of the round, blunt head, a continuous frill or embryonic fin of great delicacy passes backward as a sort of erect crest, and reaches quite to the tip of the tail. The mouth makes its appearance, after an interval of some days, as a slit across the under side of the head. Around the throat complicated changes rapidly follow, rods of cartilage encircling the gullet, and forming the rudimentary gill-arches, destined a few weeks later to bear red, comb-like gills.

When about double its original length, the little whiting is very gaily decorated. It differs altogether from the haddock, which has merely irregular patches of black along the body and tail; or the cod, with its four dark bands encircling the trunk in a regular series: for the whiting has long rows of black stars on each side of the body, a few similar stellate grains on the cheek, jaws, and abdomen, while over the whole of the general surface—head, body, sides, abdomen, and tail—the delicate canary-colour spots which distinguish this species still occur, and are quite characteristic during all its larval life. No other larval food-fish in our seas is coloured in precisely this way. Its translucency, moreover, is very striking—it is so much more pellucid than the young of any closely allied species. The eyes are large and silvery, with a decided tinge of blue, and beyond the obtuse snout the lower jaw projects most prominently. Few larval fishes in our northern waters are so beautifully tinted and so exquisitely delicate in form as the minute whiting six or eight weeks old. The eel-like ling with its bold longitudinal stripes, the gurnard with its mingled chrome and ebony stars, and the sole with its blotches of stone-colour, exhibit remarkable arrangements of pigment, it cannot be questioned, but they must yield the palm to the whiting, adorned in its brilliant dress of lovely canary-yellow and jet black. During the summer months certain shielded bays, where adult whiting are common, teem with these minute developing young. They have emerged from the eggs produced so plentifully in early spring by the parent fish. Such eggs are dispersed, as already noted, in countless numbers, and float in

invisible clouds over the breeding-areas. The newly hatched arvæ on emerging are as invisible to the naked eye as the microscopic eggs themselves. A single sweep of the naturalist's tow-net will capture hundreds of both eggs and fry. When secured, the net requires to be dipped in a large vessel of clean sea-water, and gently waved to and fro, so that the delicate embryos which cling to the meshes may be detached, and, as they float about, may be examined by means of a lens. Protected bays, where appropriate food is plentiful, are the favourite resorts of the whiting in common with the cod, haddock, and other fishes, at the breeding-season; but certain banks and areas in the open sea may also be chosen by them. There the eggs develop, the young hatch out, and the early days of larval existence are passed. Strangely enough, the youngest larvæ not only are destitute of a mouth, but seem to have no blood-circulation. For fully a week after liberation from the egg no circulation of blood is observed; and when the red fluid does at last appear, its flow is feeble, and the system of blood-vessels is very simple. The young fish, despite their physical disadvantages, grow apace. When about half an inch in length, the continuous crest, which at first runs all the way from the head to the tail, begins to show a threefold division. This breaking-up of the marginal fin is the first indication of the three dorsal fins which stand erect upon the back of the adult. The side fins also develop rapidly—two pairs of them; one pair on the throat, the other pair at the shoulder. The latter are the pectoral, or breast fins, and they are most efficient swimming-organs later in life. Along the under side of the body a double series of black spots occurs, these patches being very noticeable when the fish is much larger. On reaching the length of an inch other lines of spots are visible, one very well-marked series occurring along the back, and ultimately spreading irregularly over the sides. These variable lines in the whiting are quite unlike the definite transverse bars of the developing cod or the scattered spots of the haddock. When about one-eighth of an inch longer, a protuberance barely perceptible at the tip of the lower jaw indicates the growing barbel. The patches on the back, moreover, become much more definite at this time, and there are other signs of what the naturalist terms 'specific differentiation.' Up to this stage the untrained observer would find it difficult to discriminate the different species. Old Aubrey tells us that Beaumont and Fletcher 'had the same cloathes, cloak, &c., and even shared one bench of the house between them,' but they were not more

embarrassingly alike than these larval fishes. Every day, however, now that the earlier features have disappeared, increases their dissimilarity, and the young whiting can be readily distinguished from the haddock by its possession of a rudimentary barbel on the chin, and from the cod by the shortness of the snout, the shape of the fins, and other points, especially external coloration. Such distinctive features continue to be still further emphasised during subsequent development, and as the marks of early immaturity vanish the configuration of the adult is rapidly assumed.

The whiting still continues to associate with its congeners, the young cod and other species, seeking food or shelter together, and gathering in shoals along rocky shores, about estuaries, and in the neighbourhood of piers and landings. These small fishes, upwards of five inches in length, are young and, as the common expression has it, very foolish. They so readily seize upon anything in the shape of food that they fall an easy prey to the piscatorial novices so familiarly seen stationed upon every available point about harbours and breakwaters. It is to the boys, however, that they afford chiefest delight. The young urchins never tire of hooking and pulling in their silvery victims, and the numbers of these valuable fishes must be seriously thinned every year by this relentless slaughter. Such fishes, when they descend into deeper water, frequently cause much inconvenience to fishermen, from the eagerness with which they take the bait intended for larger and more valuable fish. For several seasons the whiting associates with other species, and the shoals of small fishes which annually hover about the rocky portions of the coast include cod, haddock, coal-fish, and many related kinds. As they grow larger, the mixed assemblage breaks up, and the various individuals seek the company of their own kindred, and henceforth prefer it. Probably our common food-fishes, which grow so slowly during their days of infancy, may increase at a much greater rate after passing the length of five or six inches. There is much reason for believing that. Yet a considerable interval must elapse before they attain a size and weight suitable for the table. Long before that desirable condition is reached they have been sadly decimated. No more delicate or desirable fare could be imagined than these young fishes afford, and countless hosts of dwellers in the sea seem to be fully aware of it. Even the sylph-like medusæ engulf the fry of the food-fishes with avidity. If Sir Humphry Davy was right in surmising that not one in two hundred of the eggs of the salmon escapes every danger and comes to perfection in our rivers, who shall say what

proportion of the young of our food-fishes reach the adult stage? Beneath the blue waves the 'slaughter of the innocents' goes on relentlessly; yet the struggle for existence, apparently so cruel and keen, is Nature's direct method of preserving the balance of life in the sea, nay, of assuring the existence of any life whatsoever there. The fertility of our most valuable fishes is so great that the war waged upon the young does not imperil the perpetuation of the race. The number of eggs produced every season by the cod, haddock, whiting, ling, sole, halibut, mackerel, and other fishes in our seas is astounding. Buckland once weighed a cod's roe of 8 lbs., and ascertained that it contained no fewer than 6,867,000 eggs. In these enormous quantities the parent fish produce the eggs, and scatter them in the open waters, where they are fertilised and undergo their development. This is one of Nature's chief methods of compensation: the varying fecundity of different species counterbalancing the dangers and perils of early larval life. The struggle for existence amongst the inhabitants of the sea is no hand-to-hand fight like that of the Saxon and Dane of old; it is a contest, rather, between the few, powerful and well-armed, and the multitude, comparatively defenceless, but outreaching in number the limits of human computation.

The food-fishes have no enemies more destructive and inexorable than the shark tribe. But how carefully the young shark is protected and provided for! Not only is it a strong and robust creature from the first—it is usually shielded within a horny case, from which it emerges only when its teeth are formed and the denticles of its skin are fairly developed. But the parent shark produces very few young, and it was needful to thus securely protect them, that the tribe might run no risk of extinction. How different is it with the infant cod, or haddock, or whiting! Cast adrift by its parents ere it is born (for a week or more elapses after the egg is deposited before the young fish emerges), the little nursling is wafted hither and thither upon the restless sea, until it is able to guide its own course and prey upon other creatures. On emerging from the egg a thousand perils threaten its existence. No more frail or defenceless creature exists. It is weak, inactive, naked, and without scales. At every moment it is threatened with destruction. Yet, all unconscious of peril, it floats happily about in the upper waters, and develops rapidly under the genial light and warmth of the sun's rays. If it should collide with some hard substance—a buoy or a floating spar—it cannot survive the shock; a keen frost may pinch it fatally, or chemical

impurities may choke and poison it. A hundred dangers face it, each as deadly as the others. The beautiful jelly-fish, proudly sailing through the water, takes part in the dire work; nay, a large mother cod may, perchance, find herself in the midst of a crowd of her own progeny, and, opening her capacious mouth, may coolly swallow them by hundreds. Warred upon by their own species and by a multitude of other enemies, our food-fishes would suffer extinction were the young not produced in numbers incalculably vast. But it must not be forgotten that this destruction, apparently so inordinate and dire, has its salutary aspect. Were the destroying agencies not both numerous and potent, the limits of the sea would be too small for the population that would rapidly come into existence. Were the eggs of a single pair of whiting, haddock, or cod to reach the adult state and perpetuate their kind, the ocean, vast as it is, would be assuredly stocked to overflowing. A careful calculation has been made regarding the fecundity of the herring, a species far less prolific than the whiting or cod, and the result proved beyond doubt that the progeny of a single pair would, in a few years, bulk as large as our globe itself. The waste of life in the sea, if waste it can be called, is so enormous that no such danger is likely to threaten the watery world. The real jeopardy lies in the precisely opposite direction. The depletion of the sea and a serious scarcity of valuable food-fishes constitute a much more imminent danger. Certain fishing-grounds, indeed, already show signs of exhaustion, and efficient means will ere long require to be taken for restoring the fertility of over-fished areas in the Atlantic and the North Sea. What can be done to avert the calamity here referred to? Storms and changes of temperature, we know, work sad havoc amongst the eggs of those fishes which deposit them in the upper waters; various enemies devour the young when they are hatched, and so mercilessly that probably not one in a thousand passes through infancy scathless; birds pounce upon the larger examples, or they are senselessly captured by man, though too small for marketable purposes; finally, the adult fish wage a remorseless war upon each other, and man comes, like the proverbial lawyer, to assist in the strife, and to make sure of carrying away a substantial part of the spoil.

In a larger and fuller knowledge of the life-history of our more familiar fishes—those, that is to say, valuable for food—the means may yet appear by which the recuperation of the sea's finny population may be efficiently taken in hand. We know what happy results have followed upon a thorough scientific knowledge of the

salmon in our rivers. The salmon has been thoroughly studied, and its development ascertained from the egg onward; the 'parr' and 'smolt' controversy has been brought to a termination, and the career of the 'king of the river,' from the cradle to the grave, has been made familiar to us. It is far otherwise with marine fishes. Even amongst scientific men their life-history is far from generally known. Thanks to a small company of zoologists at home and in America, a body of information has been collected in recent years which will be of the utmost value from a legislative as well as a zoological point of view. Such information must form, in fact, the foundation of a science of the fisheries, and gives hope that the pressing problems relating to our marine-fish supply will be, ere long, resolutely attacked and worthily solved. A complete knowledge of the life-history of the more valuable food-fishes is a necessary preliminary to that desirable consummation.

EDWARD E. PRINCE.

Mrs. Juliet.

BY MRS. ALFRED W. HUNT.

CHAPTER I.

THE DIVINE PARTHENESEA.

True to the kindred points of heaven and home.—WORDSWORTH.

The servitor's gown clung to him with Nessian venom. He thought himself ridiculous in a garb under which Latimer must have walked erect, and in which Hooker in his young days possibly flaunted in a vein of no discommendable vanity. In the depth of college shades, or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrank from observation.—ESSAYS OF ELIA.

‘I DO so wish I had never consented to go!’ said the Rev. Brampton Gerard, as he contemplated a portmanteau, hat-box, railway-rug, and umbrella, which were piled up by the door of the hall.

‘So do I, sometimes,’ said a dutiful little wife, who had done much to achieve the feat of getting him ready ten minutes before the carriage came round; ‘but I am sure you will enjoy it.’

‘I never enjoyed it when I was young. London was too big for me then. It is twice as big now, and I am twice as old.’

He sighed. She sighed too, but promptly said—

‘And you know that you are only going to be away a fortnight.’

Mr. Gerard had not been many miles south of Kendal for the last twenty years. He had spent them in his peaceful and beautiful home, which was within five minutes’ walk of one of the prettiest of the English Lakes. When a holiday had fallen to his lot, he had enjoyed it with friends in Scotland, or had crossed over to Ireland by the Barrow route, but London pavement had not felt the pressure of his feet for nearly a quarter of a century, and London people had only been seen by him as temporary occupants of ‘Genteel Apartments’ or furnished houses in the

Lake district. Now, however, in the year 1857, when he was all but threescore-and-ten, one of the best known and liked of his friends had invited him to spend a fortnight in London in the month of May.

'I shall know no one! I shall care for no one!' he groaned. 'I shall lose my way every time I go out. I shall not even know how to behave myself! Fashions are changed; manners are quite different. People dine when you and I are beginning to think of going to bed!'

'Never mind, you will enjoy it,' reiterated the comely old lady, who forty years before had stood by the altar with him; 'and I hope and trust you will doubly enjoy your home when you return.'

'That I certainly shall,' he answered. 'It was a blessed day for me when I married you. Do you know, when I think of my own happiness I am so grateful that I should like to travel about from place to place marrying all true lovers.'

'My dear, take care; that's a very dangerous frame of mind! And yet I don't know; I must say I always want to see them happy myself. Brampton, everyone tells me that you and I are too romantic.'

'That's impossible! Quite impossible! If people would but cherish the little bit of romance that is born with them, the world would be a thousand times happier. Oh, Phoebe, I am afraid that I hear the sound of wheels.'

She had heard it already.

'You will enjoy London, I am sure,' she once more repeated. 'It will do you good.'

'I don't know, dear. When a man has such a home as I have, it is very foolish to leave it.'

The carriage had come to the door; the luggage was being put in.

'Good-bye,' she said. 'You are going into the great wide world, away from me. Be careful. Steel your heart: you are so tender-hearted!'

'I tender-hearted! Surely not more than I ought to be?'

'Yes, you are. If anyone pleads piteously, you do find it so hard to resist.'

He smiled at her anxiety and bade her farewell.

'Good-bye,' he said once more, and thought, 'How wonderfully my poor dear wife mistakes my character! She thinks me yielding, because a few words from her have such power over me,

but with other people I am as firm as a rock. After all, I shall only be away a fortnight,' was his next thought, and he gradually began to take pleasure in the sight of new places. He wondered if the men who lived in the many rectories which flashed for a moment before his eyes and vanished, were as happy as he, and marvelled at the blackness of the manufacturing towns and the frantic speed of the locomotive. The day passed by; the journey had been much easier than he had anticipated; he had perhaps done well to undertake it. Mr. Freeman, who was about to be his host, was an M.P., a merchant, and a millionaire; Mrs. Freeman a pretty, witty, and genuinely kind woman, who liked to see her house filled. People of that disposition have no difficulty in gratifying such a taste. The Freemans lived in a mansion in Duke's Gardens.

Mr. Gerard was rather tired with his journey and rested in his room till dinner-time. He went downstairs in time to be introduced to one or two of his fellow-guests, but did not know whether they were staying in the house or only there for an hour or two.

'I am going to ask you to take Mrs. Cradock in to dinner,' said his host. 'I am sure you will like her.'

'Who is Mrs. Cradock?' was trembling on Mr. Gerard's lips, but Mr. Freeman exclaimed—

'Don't say that you have not heard of Mrs. Cradock! She is one of the richest women in the country. Her husband left all he had to her, and she can do what she likes with it.'

Mr. Gerard glanced across the room and saw a rather more than middle-aged lady, sitting in a very easy chair. Her face was comely but not refined, her figure a good deal obscured by stoutness, her dress a rich brocade of many hues and much wealth of pattern, but her jewels absolutely startled him. A magnificent diamond necklace shot forth subdued rays from an inveterate crease in her neck, emeralds and diamonds emitted almost angry gleams from the front of her dress, and earrings, bracelets, and various detached sprays flashed distracting lights at each other. There were many other diamonds in the room, but no such diamonds as these.

'Bless my heart!' thought Mr. Gerard, 'what would my dear Phoebe say to this? It is scarcely safe to be in a house with so much portable wealth.'

'That is Mrs. Cradock,' whispered Mr. Freeman. 'Look at her diamonds. It was all done by pills. You have heard of Cradock's Sympathetic Pills? Mr. Cradock was her husband. He invented a

pill which would cure all illnesses, great or small, provided only the patient had faith in the remedy. When the cure was not effected, the patient had no one to blame but himself. You have no idea what a run those pills had, and have still. She is rolling in money.'

'I should like to realise the exact sensation of rolling in money,' remarked Mr. Gerard. 'But these pills did not keep Mr. Cradock alive, it seems.'

'Oh, you couldn't expect him to believe in them! That young lady on the sofa is her niece—Miss Juliet Cradock.'

Mr. Gerard turned to look at a very pretty, fair-haired, bright-eyed, vivacious girl, who was talking to a clever, eager, almost haggard-looking man of thirty or so, and seemed much interested in his conversation.

'He is a writer,' explained Mrs. Freeman, who had now taken her husband's place, 'and an actor—an amateur of course, or he would not be here at this hour, but he is a very clever fellow.'

'He seems to be paying a great deal of attention to the young lady, and I don't wonder—she is so pretty.'

'Yes, and when those diamonds are in the room everyone sees her in a reflected light, but very likely her aunt won't leave her much—aunts are not to be trusted.'

Mr. Gerard sighed: this was such an unromantic mode of speaking. Mrs. Freeman glided away to perform some pressing introductions, and he moved nearer to the richly endowed lady who had been committed to his care. She was surrounded by gentlemen, and he could not approach her until shortly before dinner was announced, when Mr. Freeman led him forward to introduce him.

'Oh, you are going to take me down,' she said; 'I was just looking at you, for I saw that you were a clergyman. I do so like clergymen, and one sees so few in London. In the country one sees so many, but I can't think what becomes of them in London.'

'I am glad to hear that you have such a good opinion of my brethren, and am sorry that you see so few of them in London.'

'Oh, perhaps it is as well,' said Mrs. Cradock; 'I dare say it is. My dear Cradock was very generous to me, but the London clergy would make a poor woman of me in a week if they had their way. I mean those I don't know,' she added apologetically; 'those that send me letters asking me to till what they call little forgotten or neglected corners in the heavenly vineyard.'

Mr. Gerard gazed curiously in the lady's face; he could not decide whether she was wise or foolish. She was evidently a Yorkshire woman, and they are often shrewd and outspoken. He was familiar with the type, for Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield are apt to overflow into the Lake District in the summer.

'Do you know that gentleman who is sitting by the young lady in white at the end of the table—my niece Juliet, I mean?' asked Mrs. Cradock, as soon as she had, after mighty struggles, settled herself down to her liking in her chair.

He looked. It was the same clever-looking man who had been talking to Miss Juliet in the drawing-room. 'Yes, he is an author; Mrs. Freeman told me so, but she did not tell me his name.'

'It is Congreve. I can tell you that,' exclaimed the old lady, discontentedly. 'Yes, he writes, but that is a very poor sort of thing!'

'And he acts too.'

'Acts!'

'Oh, only as an amateur.'

'Worse and worse! If you let yourself down to do the acting, you may just as well be paid for it. Juliet has been making a great friend of him lately, but I don't care to see an actor sitting by any niece of mine. She is such a strange girl, Mr. Gerard. I don't believe she ever gives a thought to whether the man she is talking to is illegible or not.'

It was strange that the mistress of so many diamonds had not mastered the English language. He was amazed, but said, 'Well, at all events, I see a very handsome young gentleman who looks as if he would like to change places with Mr. Congreve.'

Mrs. Cradock slowly and carefully examined the table, and at a little distance, but on the same side as Miss Juliet, saw a good-looking young fellow whose eyes were often turned in her direction, and who seemed anything but satisfied with what he saw.

'Ah now, Mr. Gerard,' she exclaimed, gazing admiringly at her new friend. 'It is clever of you to see things so quickly as that, for you are quite right; that young man is another great friend of hers, and I do believe that he is not best pleased to see anyone but himself sitting alongside of my niece Juliet. That is Mr. Aylesbury; he is a soldier—the East India Company are his masters, and I am told that he is to start for India in the morning.'

'Aylesbury!' cried Mr. Gerard; 'I once knew a clergyman of

that name who had a living in the North Riding. He afterwards went out to Australia as bishop. He was the best friend I ever had.'

'Most likely he was a relation of this young Aylesbury; I know he has been a great deal in Australia, because he gave Juliet that necklace of Cingalese sapphires she is wearing.'

The evidence did not seem strong, but Mr. Gerard was deeply interested. The very name of Aylesbury filled his heart with emotion. His thoughts flew to the past and stayed there, and he did not know how long he had been silently musing on old times when he heard Mrs. Cradock saying, 'Well, you must have been thinking of something *uncommonly* interesting!'

'I was. I beg your pardon, but the name of Aylesbury carried me back——'

'Ah, my dear Cradock used to get carried back just in the same way; but when you have anyone at hand to talk to, it is just as well to talk. There is plenty of time to brood over old things when you are alone. For my part I don't much care to think of them; my young days didn't amount to much; life was much pleasanter both to live and to think about after my dear husband made that happy hit with the pills!' And then, before Mr. Gerard could speak, she exclaimed, 'And yet youth and beauty are something. Just think—there was a time when I was as beautiful as my niece Juliet.'

Mr. Gerard was afterwards afraid that on hearing this he had shown some of the surprise he had felt. At first he had only thought of Sophia Western's aunt, who told her niece how in her youth she had been called the divine Parthenessa, but after that he distinctly remembered looking at Mrs. Cradock and thinking that a face which consisted of what seemed to him a quantity of insignificant features huddled together in the middle of a wide expanse of cheek and chin—or rather chins—could never at any time have deserved to be called beautiful. Miss Juliet was beautiful; every line of her sweet face was perfect—every feature good; but this poor lady—he forbore to finish that thought, and Mrs. Cradock herself spared him the trouble of finding something to say by remarking, 'It will be strange if this Mr. Aylesbury is a son of your friend—he was a clergyman, you said.'

'Yes, he had a living in Yorkshire, and then he was arch-deacon, and afterwards they made him a colonial bishop. He married soon after he went to Australia, and died a month or two afterwards.'

'This young man is a soldier. He has been at home on leave, but is going back to India at once, I believe. Soldiers are all very well, but I like clergymen. Cradock liked them too. I told you so before. He always supported the church at public meetings, and helped it handsomely with money too. You should have heard the sermon that Archdeacon Jenkins preached the Sunday after the funeral—Cradock's funeral, I mean. He did speak in such favourable terms of my poor demised husband. There was not a dry eye in the whole church. Not that I was there to see; how could I go there or anywhere within a few days of the time when my dear Cradock had gone to solve the great potato?'

This time Mr. Gerard was so startled that he could scarcely avoid showing it. What could she mean? 'The great potato'—was she mad? Suddenly Rabelais' last words flashed upon his mind, and all was explained. Mrs. Cradock's *peut-être* was a large-sized British vegetable, and she had rolled it out with much satisfaction.

'You feel for me, I see,' said the lady, who thus interpreted his silence.

'I do indeed. I have a dear good wife myself, and know the blessings of a happy marriage.'

'Yes,' observed Mrs. Cradock thoughtfully, 'there are some blessings; but I think the men get most of them. However, women can be happy too, if only their husbands have offices out of the house, and go out a great deal. That was the best of Cradock—he got his fits of bad temper over out of the house. We were very happy. I will never marry anyone who has not a business to attend to. I couldn't endure a man who was always hanging about the house.'

Again Mr. Gerard was startled to the very verge of ill manners. Most truly had he said that he should not know how to behave in London. Mrs. Cradock was certainly sixty, and might be more, and yet she was calmly contemplating a new marriage.

'It is better when people have regular work,' he stammered; he scarcely knew what he was saying.

'Indeed it is—nothing will ever induce me to marry anyone who has not.'

He looked up the table and down the table, in the hope that a slight break would cause a change in the conversation. Miss Juliet was still talking with great animation to the young author, who still seemed delighted to listen. Mr. Aylesbury had settled

down into a state of pensive melancholy, from which he occasionally roused himself to say a few words to one of the ladies next to him. But Mrs. Cradock began to talk again, and this time not of marrying, and presently the ladies retired to the drawing-room.

'My dear, I particularly desire to know if that young Mr. Aylesbury who is staying here is related to the Bishop of Kingsland,' inquired Mrs. Cradock, as soon as she had an opportunity of speaking to Mrs. Freeman.

'Yes, of course he is. The Bishop was his father. I wonder he has never told you that.'

'Juliet is the one he tells things to—he may have told her. I am glad he is the Bishop's son. That dear old clergyman who took me in to dinner will be delighted. Celia, my love, if ever I marry again, that delightful old clergyman shall perform the ceremony.'

Mrs. Freeman received this information calmly; she received everything that Mrs. Cradock said calmly. Her friendship with Mrs. Cradock was of very old standing, and had been cemented by many acts of surpassing kindness. For this cause neither she nor her husband ever quailed before the old lady's vulgarity. They had, indeed, all but lost the power of seeing it, and when it was impossible not to do so, good deeds of all kinds rose up in their memory and drove out every other thought, for they knew that they owed their pleasant home, their large circle of friends, their place in the world, and all that they had, to Mr. Cradock's steady generosity when Mr. Freeman was a young man.

'I have good news for you, dear Mr. Gerard,' said Mrs. Cradock, when the gentlemen reappeared. 'I have been making inquiries, and that Mr. Aylesbury really is the Bishop's son.'

'You don't say so! What a pleasant surprise! I had not the least conception that he ever had a son. Excuse me, madam, but I must not lose a moment in making myself known to him.'

'I can present you,' she began, but her words were unheard by Mr. Gerard, who rapidly crossed the room, laid his hand on Mr. Aylesbury's arm, and said, 'I have come to claim your acquaintance. Your father was the best friend I ever had. Come and sit by my side, and let me have the great pleasure of talking of him. God bless him for ever!' They retreated to a distant sofa.

'My emotion must seem strange to you,' said the old man, 'for though your father and I were friends, you can never have heard of me from him.'

‘Unhappily not, for he died before I was born.’

‘I know—I know he did; that’s why I said you could never have heard of me. Let me tell you what reason I had to love him. We were boys together at Rugby—happy, hopeful boys—sometimes friendly rivals for school honours, always firm friends. We were both entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, and were looking forward to our university career when my father died very suddenly, leaving my mother in great straits for money, and all idea of my going to Cambridge had to be abandoned. This meant abandoning any hope of my ever being able to make a home for her, and it was still more grievous as I had even then the promise of the living which I now enjoy. My mother and I were in despair. Your father came to me then. He was poor, too, and even more alone in the world than I, but his father had left a sum of money large enough to defray his expenses at college. Your father knew that my not going to college meant the loss of the living that had been promised me, and was in fact ruin. He offered me half the money bequeathed to him by his father, and said that what was sufficient for him if he went to Trinity, as a gentleman’s son usually goes, would be sufficient for both of us if we went as sizars, and entreated me to let him make this small sacrifice and secure my future. Those are his very words. I resisted, but I was in such straits that at last he prevailed on me to accept, and laid me under an obligation from which I shall never be released. His noble generosity saved me from despair. But for him my dear mother, who was even then suffering from the disease of which she ultimately died, must have spent the last years of her life not only without any of the comforts an invalid requires, but in positive want, and I should probably have ended my days as a forlorn old clerk. I can give you no idea how nobly your father carried out his project. In those days sizars were treated almost as criminals; the ordinary undergraduates scarcely spoke to them. They were not allowed to sit down to table with the others, but sent into the gallery to wait until their betters had dined, when the scraps left on the table fell to their lot, and they were expected to eat and be thankful. That was not all; there were worse things to bear than that. I assure you if I had known what mortifications your dear father would have to endure for my sake, I could not possibly have accepted his offer; but I did accept it and shall for ever be grateful to him.’

‘It was like him,’ said Aylesbury; ‘at least, it is like all that I have ever heard of him. I wish I had known my father.’

'It is hard to be born after the death of such a father as that,' said Mr. Gerard. 'You will wonder how I who loved him so much could be ignorant that he had left a son, but let me explain. We were like brothers when he was in England, but the last letter I ever had from him was soon after his arrival in Australia. He told me that he was going to marry, and the next news I heard was that he was dead.'

'Yes, it was most melancholy; he died six months after he reached Sydney. My mother's family always said that he had caught cold in coming out. He had not understood that it would get colder and colder, and he would want warm clothing, and had let all his wraps be stowed away in the hold of the vessel. My mother's married life was a short one.'

'I never could trace her. I did my best, but had no success.'

'She left her home at once and went to a married sister very far up the country. She was ill, and my father's death killed her. She died in less than a year.'

Mr. Gerard was listening to these details with the keenest interest, but even he could not help observing that Aylesbury's eyes were for ever straying to the corner of the room where Miss Juliet was sitting, so he said, 'Don't let me detain you; I can talk some other time. I only wish to tell you what a debt of gratitude I owe to your father, and to entreat you to look on me as a friend who will always be too glad to perform any service for you in return.'

'Thank you, sir,' replied the young man; 'I thank you most sincerely.' His words were spoken absently, and his eyes were fixed on Miss Juliet.

'But I mean what I say,' insisted Mr. Gerard, 'and, indeed, I ought to mean it. I should be the basest of men if I could forget what your father did and suffered for me. Whenever I can do anything for you, come to me as confidently as if I were your own father.'

At last Aylesbury was giving his attention entirely to his new friend. He was gazing eagerly in the old man's wistful, kindly face, and carefully studying every line and feature. He seemed to be trying to ascertain how much strength of purpose and lasting depth of feeling lurked behind this generous readiness to take on himself the burden of past obligations. What he saw must have satisfied him, for he said, almost bitterly—

'It's almost hard that this should come now. Mr. Gerard, if things had but gone well with me I might have put your kind-

ness to the proof. My request would have been unusual. 'How I wonder what you would have said!'

'I should have been very glad to be put to the proof,' replied Mr. Gerard unflinchingly, 'but do not let me monopolise you now—you have other friends here. Mrs. Cradock told me that you were soon going to leave England.'

'Soon going to leave England!' repeated Aylesbury with a touch of something between bitterness and despair in his voice. 'This is my last night for a long time—perhaps for ever. I am to leave this house soon after six o'clock to-morrow morning for Portsmouth. We sail in the afternoon or early evening.' And then he looked at the girl whose face so rivetted his eyes. The haggard young playwright was once more sitting by her side.

'To-morrow!' exclaimed Mr. Gerard; 'I wish it were not so soon.'

'I don't know what I wish,' said Aylesbury, distractedly; 'sometimes I think I shall be better away.'

Mr. Gerard was full of pity for him, but there was something in the young man's face which forbade any expression of sympathy or allusion to the young lady, so he only said 'Let me hear from you occasionally. Forgive the request; men don't like letter-writing, but I don't want to lose sight of you again. Remember that I want to be considered as your father's representative. He made a great sacrifice for me, and there shall be no sacrifice that I will not make for you. Good-bye! Let me hear from you two or three times a year at least, and if I am alive when you return, come to Limberthwaite Rectory, and look on it as your home. Here is my card with the address,' and having said this, Mr. Gerard rose, for he wished to give his young friend a chance of having the explanation with Miss Juliet which seemed to be so much needed.

Aylesbury at once availed himself of it. The haggard-looking author withdrew, though he evidently did it most unwillingly, and the next time Mr. Gerard's eyes strayed in that direction he saw Aylesbury and Miss Juliet talking so earnestly that they must have succeeded in persuading themselves that they were alone in the room.

Was Mr. Gerard pleased or not when he saw Mrs. Cradock's cumbrous form move across the room and drop heavily down into a chair by his side? She began to talk to him at once so vigorously that for a long time she even forgot to watch her niece, and he forgot too. At last she exclaimed—

'Dear me, most of the people seem to have gone! It must be late. I wonder where Juliet is! Oh, I do declare she is talking to that young Aylesbury now. He is a very nice young man, I have no doubt, and a son of your friend, which is in his favour, but when will Juliet make up that poor foolish mind of hers not to waste time on people of this kind? I have told her over and over again that she, who is entirely unprovided for unless I take it into my head to do something for her, ought never to have anything to do with people unless they are illegible. As soon as I am alone with her I shall give her a good scolding!'

'He is as charming a young man as you could wish to see,' said Mr. Gerard nervously; her malaprops disconcerted him.

'Oh, very likely. I don't dispute his being charming, but that doesn't make him illegible.'

CHAPTER II.

IN THE SMALL DRAWING-ROOM.

Old folk and young folk still at odds, of course:

Agé quarrels because spring puts forth a leaf,

While winter has a mind that boughs stay bare—R. BROWNING.

JULIET CRADOCK retired to her own room. She was tired but wholly unaware of it; her heart was full of delight, for she had just become reconciled to Aylesbury, with whom she had for some days been on bad terms. Great as her delight was, it could not but be tempered by the thought that when she arose next morning, he would have left London, and be speeding on his way to encounter the dangers of war. Their reconciliation had, however, made her so happy that as yet she had not begun to realise the anxieties which separation from him would entail. She was sitting full of hope and trust, when Clements, her aunt's maid, came to say that she was to go at once to Mrs. Cradock. 'My aunt wants me!' exclaimed Juliet, 'but it is late! Surely she is in bed by this time?'

'Yes, Miss Juliet, she is in bed, but she is in a sad way about something.'

'Well, I'll go,' said Juliet, most reluctantly.

'Excuse my making the remark, Miss Juliet, but if I were you, I would not answer her much. She seems irritable to-night.'

Irritable was a word which people about Mrs. Cradock were

apt to use to describe a state which others might have characterised more harshly. Juliet recoiled; her thoughts, even in spite of impending separation from him she loved, were so pleasant that she could not bear the idea of having them rudely dispersed by Mrs. Cradock's forcible reproaches and accusations.

'Oh dear! am I the one she is angry with?'

Anxiously she put this question, for indeed Mrs. Cradock's anger was a well-known quantity, and a thing to cause alarm.

'I am afraid so, Miss Juliet, I really am, but I think it will blow over this time if you will only answer her back prudently. If I were you, I'd just agree with whatever she says, and promise to do whatever she asks.'

'I wish I could. She says things no one can bear to hear, and asks things no one can bear to do.'

'Well, I don't know how I'd manage.'

Clements knew perfectly. She had been five-and-twenty years with Mrs. Cradock, and had kept her place by agreeing to everything she could agree to, and everything she couldn't, besides. This did not prevent her from taking her own way in the end, and inducing her mistress to take it too; only, to achieve this, it was necessary to wait until good temper was restored. Clements had been a superior being who condescended to overlook Juliet's nurse and nursery, when she had come as a child to the shelter of her uncle's house some ten years before. Clements had always been kind to the desolate little orphan, and anxious that she should be a favourite with her aunt, and Clements was just as anxious still.

Slowly and most unwillingly, Juliet rose from her seat, and went to Mrs. Cradock's room. That lady was sitting up in bed with a disturbed countenance, and angry eyes fixed on the door by which the girl was to enter. Candles were burning on a table by the bedside. Juliet opened the door, put her pretty head into the room, and said, 'Clements says you want me, aunt. Is there anything that I can do?'

'Yes, there is. You can come in and shut that door behind you. I don't see why everyone passing by need hear what I have to say to you. There! Now let me tell you, Miss Juliet, that I am much displeased with you. I did make up my mind to wait till morning to speak, but I begin to feel that I shall not close an eye all night if I don't let you know my mind at once.' Her angry little eyes were all this time looking so sharply at Juliet that she was afraid to go nearer to them.

'Come nearer!' said Mrs. Cradock.

The malefactor obeyed. Her movements were slow and languid; her mind revolted from what was probably going to follow. She wanted to think of Aylesbury, and how dearly she loved him, and how happy she was in being reconciled to him, and this cruel aunt of hers was about to drag her into another world—a world of jangling discord and submission to expediency.

Juliet still stood near the door, and hoped to be able to escape going farther into the room. Mrs. Cradock at once detected this, and exclaimed in a harsh voice, 'Oh! so far as I am concerned, you are welcome to stay by the door if you like, so long as it is shut. I am quite able to make myself heard, thank God! I am in full possession of my faculties; so if you have anything to say that can excuse your conduct, I shall be extremely glad to know it at once.'

Juliet went to the bedside. If Mrs. Cradock wished her to go nearer, she would go nearer—her one desire was to escape quickly and peaceably.

'Juliet Cradock,' said the old lady, solemnly, 'I should like to know what you mean. You know what I told you a few days ago; you know I then informed you that I had every reason to believe that an extremely good opportunity of settling you favourably in life would soon occur—that I had received a friendly hint of it—and yet you go and behave in a way that would put any nice man quite out of love with you in a moment, if he were to hear of it!'

'What do you mean, aunt? What can I have done? I know of nothing.'

'You must know what you have done! And you are always doing it! You are always getting into corners of rooms and sitting talking for hours together with gentlemen who are not worthy of engaging your attention at all. You have spent the whole of this evening in this way. First, you were talking to that amateur actor—poor shaggy-haired, thin-cheeked, half-starved-looking creature that he is, I wonder at your liking to be seen with him—and then to that Mr. Aylesbury. I don't say so much about your talking to Mr. Aylesbury, for I hear that he is going away the first thing in the morning, so there will be an end of him, I hope; but I will not allow you to go on encouraging Mr. Congreve.'

This was a much milder scolding than Juliet had anticipated.

She began to breathe more freely, and said in a very dutiful voice, 'Tell me what you wish me to do.'

'I wish you not to be so ridiculously taken up with his conversation. What can he have to converse about that need make you look so interested? I don't like it at all. The one thing that it is important for a girl to attend to is not to get herself talked about, and you will be talked about if you scatter yourself about so promiscuously in private conversations. The way you go on is simply ridiculous! When that Mr. Congreve is talking to you, you give me the impression of being ready to sit where you are for hours together, just for the sake of what is falling from his lips.'

'And so I would. Oh, aunt, he is so clever! He puts things so picturesquely. He may not be nice-looking, but he is so good to talk to, and to-night he was telling me the plot of a play that he has just written.'

'Why should he do that? We are able to go to the theatre and get to know the plot of his play for ourselves if we want to know it; and as for his cleverness, that's nothing to us either. It is very foolish of you, Juliet; you like this Mr. Congreve better than any man you know. I thoroughly understand you, and I can see you do. I am very penetrating, and you can't deceive me.'

'I don't like Mr. Congreve better than anyone I know. I like Mr. Aylesbury a thousand times more.' For her loyalty was roused, and, dangerous as this admission was, she made it.

'Your saying that just shows me how much you like Mr. Congreve.'

'I tell you I like Mr. Aylesbury a thousand times better; I like him more than anyone I ever knew.'

'For shame, Juliet!' said Mrs. Cradock, doggedly, 'you don't, and you know you don't. You wouldn't say it if it were true. You like Mr. Congreve, and you are making yourself conspicuous with him, and I won't have you conspicuous with anyone.'

'I am sure I don't want to be conspicuous,' exclaimed Juliet, between laughing and crying. 'I will do anything you like.'

'You will have to do that. For the future I insist on your staying quite close to me whenever people of this kind happen to get into rooms where we are. If you are talked about, no one worth having will ever marry you, and there are some people worth having in this world—I can tell you that.'

'I will sit by your side whenever you tell me,' said Juliet.

Indeed, if you like I will do it without being told. May I go now ?'

'No. I have not said half the things I want to say. Of course I don't believe what you tell me about young Aylesbury. I know why you say it, too. You think he is going away, so that what you say doesn't matter : I am very penetrating.'

'If you believed it, and he were not going, what would you do ?' asked Juliet.

This made Mrs. Cradock dart a glance of sharp inquiry that transfixed her niece, but as the old lady trusted to her own understanding much more than to her eyesight, she learnt nothing from Juliet's manifest confusion under it.

'I should forbid your speaking to him ; I should never allow you to see him again, that is, if I believed you had any strong feeling for him, which I don't.'

'I have. I care for him very much indeed.' For Juliet was so profoundly devoted to him that she could not bring herself to commit the disloyalty of letting it be supposed that she was indifferent.

Mrs. Cradock shook her head ; she did think it such a wise one, and looked as if she were much too wise and wary to be caught by such laughably transparent chaff as this. 'You would not be so ready to own this if it were true,' she said, with an air of absolute conviction.

'I do care for him ; I always shall,' repeated Juliet. She had plighted her troth to him an hour or two before, and her aunt would have to hear what she would consider the fatal news some time, so why not now ?

'All this foolish talk of yours about Mr. Aylesbury makes me see that I shall have to be much more on my guard against Mr. Congreve,' said Mrs. Cradock, who always wrecked herself on the rock of too much cunning.

'I assure you that I prefer Mr. Aylesbury.'

'Prefer him as much as you choose, then,' exclaimed Mrs. Cradock, who did not in the least believe her, but was angry at her persistence. 'He will soon be out of your way, and everyone says that the Mutiny is much more serious than the newspapers choose to admit, and that there is very little chance of his ever coming back, but that is of no consequence.'

'It is of great consequence,' said Juliet, beginning to cry. 'I shall always like him better than any other human being.'

'Stick to that and perhaps you will get some one to believe it

in time, but you must be a fool to try to make me do so, for if I did I should just turn you out of my house at once, as a stupid creature not fit to enjoy its advantages. However, you have given me your promise never to let Mr. Congreve talk to you alone.'

'Yes, I have given my promise,' said Juliet, who would now unhesitatingly have given the same promise with regard to every man in the world but one. 'So may I go?'

'You are in a mighty hurry. You were not in such a hurry to leave those two young men whom you have chosen to take such a fancy to!'

'I have not taken a fancy to *two* young men.'

'Oh yes, you have! You were quite ready to sit and chatter to them as long as they liked, but when your poor old aunt, who took you into her house when you hadn't a gown to your back, or a shilling to call your own, wants to have a few words with you, entirely for your own good, you keep repeating, "And now may I go?" If it were not that I am really interested in you, and really anxious to speak to you for your own good—indeed, everything I ever say to you always is for your own good—I am sure you might go and welcome. Why not? Why should I wish to keep you here at this hour and lose my night's rest for your sake, and I in such need of rest and sleep, after the vexation and worry you have caused me?'

By this time Juliet was crying bitterly.

'Oh, go, go!' exclaimed Mrs. Cradock. 'You may go as soon as you like! You never seem to think of anyone but yourself; crying that way and exciting my emotion when you know how ill it makes me. Go!'

Juliet opened the door: it was better to go, no good could be done by staying—Mrs. Cradock was in much too unreasonable a frame of mind for that, and yet it seemed so unkind to leave her thus. 'Say you forgive me, aunt,' she pleaded; 'I will never offend you in this way again, but——'

'I don't want your buts,' Mrs. Cradock exclaimed. 'There is always a "but" with you; and I don't want your tears either. It is no use standing crying there; tears never move me in the least, and remember this, if I am to consider you, you must consider me. I shall not tell you anything about the gentleman I alluded to just now. I think you might have shown some interest. Girls like you are not usually incommoded with lovers.'

'I don't know what you mean, aunt,' said Juliet, for in the excitement of this painful scene, and the confusion of her own

thoughts, she had forgotten that Mrs. Cradock had 'hinted' at a possible suitor.

'You don't expect me to believe that! Didn't I tell you some days ago that I thought I foresaw a chance of your making a brilliant and distinguished marriage?'

'I don't want to make a brilliant and distinguished marriage!' exclaimed Juliet. She was resolved to be firm at the very beginning of any attack on her liberty.

'Oh, you don't, don't you? Then what do you suppose is to become of you?'

'Won't you let me stay with you? Uncle told me that my home was to be with you.'

'How dare you begin to quote what your dear demised uncle said, and remind me of him when my mind is not attuned to such thoughts? Your uncle never meant me to be harassed with having to keep a disobedient girl about me for ever and ever. I don't mean that you are disobedient yet, but if you refuse the offer I hope very shortly to have in my power to lay before you—I will tell you what it is, Juliet,' she said, suddenly changing her tone from anger to gentle pleading; 'let me tell you now at once, for I really do want to have some one to discuss it with, it has upset me so. The news came to-night by the ten o'clock post; I did not open the letter till I was almost ready to step into bed, and you might have knocked me down with a feather after I had read it, for I was so nervous, and then, while I was thinking what a splendid thing this match would be for you, and what a distinction for your family, and how my dear lost Cradock would have approved of it, came the vexation and anxiety of thinking that all the advantage it would bring us was just as likely as not to be lost, for if Sir Gregory Jervaulx got to know of your long confidential conversations with amateur actors, and such like, he would never cast another thought in your direction—that's what made me so angry with you, Juliet.'

'Sir Gregory Jervaulx!' exclaimed Juliet, long before her aunt had finished her apologetic speech.

'Yes, Sir Gregory Jervaulx. You need not pretend to be so astonished, for you know it was only the other day that I told you I had heard something which made me hope his heart was beginning to be stirred in your favour, and now to-night's post confirms the idea. Why are you looking like that? I expected you to go out of your senses with joy. You know Sir Gregory—a baronet, Juliet! A baronet of the good old Norman line! Only think, a

real baronet seems to have begun to be willing to come forward to offer his hand to you !'

'That dreadful old man !' said Juliet. 'What can he mean ? As if I could ever care for him ! I never liked him, and I shall now like him still less.'

'Stuff !' ejaculated Mrs. Cradock. She did not attach the slightest importance to Juliet's protestations.

'But why should you imagine this ? Very likely he has no such ridiculous idea in his mind.'

'All I can tell you is that he has written to Mrs. Austin again. I told you the other day that he had written one letter to her, asking a great many questions about us, and now he has written another, and he has been to call on her besides, and has asked her all kinds of questions.'

'Such as what ?' interposed Juliet.

'He wanted to know how long we were going to stay here. What our next movements were likely to be. If she thought I should object to his following us if we went to Bournemouth, or any of the places we were talking of going to. Mrs. Austin says quite decidedly that she had no difficulty in perceiving that he had matrimony in his mind, and was sure that you were the lady he had chosen.'

'But I don't want to be chosen ! I can't endure him.'

'Juliet, you talk like a fool, but I shall not allow you to act like one. If Sir Gregory proposes, you shall accept him. My mind is quite made up on that point.'

'Indeed, you must not try to make me do that. I shall never do it—no, never.'

On this Mrs. Cradock fell into such a passion that she could not speak ; her voice absolutely failed her. She pointed angrily to the door. Juliet hesitated. She was afraid to leave her aunt until she had recovered a little. It would be appalling if she had a fit. She stood looking at Mrs. Cradock, too much afraid to speak.

'Go ! go !' exclaimed Mrs. Cradock at last, with fervent solemnity. 'Go back to your own room, and thank God on your bended knees for putting it into the mind of such a good match to fix its thoughts on you. You are not called on to give an answer yet, but remember that when you are, you shall accept Sir Gregory without one moment's hesitation, or you and I will part. Good night to you.'

'Good night, aunt,' said Juliet sadly. 'I am afraid you will be ill after this. Do lie down and try to go to sleep.'

And thus they parted; Juliet half terrified by the thought of Sir Gregory and his pretensions, and the fear of a permanent quarrel with her aunt when she refused him, and half consoled by her aunt's last words. It was quite true that she was not called on to give an answer for some time, and she might never have to do it. Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof. She deeply regretted the offence she had given to her poor old aunt. Mrs. Cradock's government was, it is true, a despotism tempered with cheques and presents of ugly jewellery, but occasionally she was very kind, and for many years now she had given Juliet a home when she had no other. That ought never to be forgotten, and yet if the old lady were bent on forcing her to marry Sir Gregory Jervaulx, all comfort in that home would be gone. He was a man of fifty, short, foolish, and insignificant—'a slight, unmeritable man,' who excited no feeling unless it were contempt. He had thin legs and rather a stout body, beady black eyes which peered restlessly around; altogether there was something almost bird-like about his appearance. His nose was slightly Roman, with an unfortunate tendency to redness on the ridge, the colour in his cheeks deepened to a patch in the centre, and Juliet had heard people say that his face would not be so red if he would but live more temperately. In spite of this he was extremely well satisfied with himself, and fond of relating stories which turned on his own good looks, and then waiting to hear his listeners ratify what had been said by words of admiration and flattery. There was a thoroughly unreal ring about all he said, and Juliet had always disliked and despised him. Could it really be possible that Mrs. Cradock would like her to marry this man? He was old—quite thirty years older than herself; he was objectionable in every way. There was not one valid reason for encouraging him, and yet if Mrs. Cradock were determined to have a baronet in her family, Juliet knew that she herself would have to seek a new home. No opposition would be tolerated if the old lady's mind were set on gracing her pedigree in this manner. 'And where could I go if I left her?' she thought. 'Who would give me a home?' And then, in the midst of her grief and perplexity, her thoughts turned to Aylesbury, and she straightway forgot that she had a care in the world. Present pain, future anxiety—all were swallowed up in the delight of being sure of his love.

Juliet might have been sitting thus for half an hour, when she heard a low knock at her bedroom door. For one moment she was filled with the fear of seeing her angry aunt, robed in white calico, 'mystic, wonderful,' enter her room, taper in hand, further to enforce some merit in the match that had been so good as 'to fix its thoughts on her.' But it was only Dorothy, a niece of Clements the maid, who was allowed to act as maid to Juliet, pending the arrival of the often-predicted time when 'she would have to turn to and learn to do something for herself.' Dorothy, a round-faced and usually cheerful-looking girl of eighteen or so, now looked very much alarmed. She looked to see if her young mistress was absolutely alone, shut the door noiselessly and carefully, and came on tiptoe to Juliet, who was too much surprised to do anything but watch the girl's movements.

'Oh, Miss Juliet!' she exclaimed breathlessly, 'how I have been waiting and watching for a chance of getting to you without anyone seeing me! I can't think what has been going on, but there has been such a coming and going, and opening and shutting of doors, and wandering about of this person and that, the whole night through, that I have never been able to manage it till now.'

'But what do you want with me, Dorothy, and who has been wandering about?'

'Mrs. Clements came to you, Miss, and you went there,' here Dorothy pointed in the direction of Mrs. Cradock's room, 'and I thought you were never coming back again, and that old clergyman gentleman has never seemed to be off the stairs, and it seemed to get later and later without my getting any nearer to being able to come to you without meeting some of them.'

'But why shouldn't you meet them?' said Juliet. 'Surely it is a very natural and innocent thing for a maid to come to her mistress's room?'

'Oh, so it is! And just to think of my not remembering that! You see I knew I was doing something that had to be done underhanded, and that's what made me feel as if I mustn't be seen at all.'

'What had you to do? What do you mean? Why were you not in bed hours ago?'

'I had something to give you, and I wasn't to let anyone see it.'

'What is it then? Why don't you give it at once?'

'I have a letter. Wait, Miss Juliet, please; I stuck it up my sleeve to hide it safely, and if it hasn't gone and worked its way

right up to my elbow! It's from Mr. Aylesbury, Miss. He was waiting about for me on the stairs to catch me on my way to your room, and he gave me the letter, and said I was to put it into your own hands the first moment I could do it without anyone's seeing me, so I have been hiding outside at the other end of the corridor till all the running about was at an end. There is your letter, Miss Juliet.'

'From Mr. Aylesbury, you said?'

'Yes, and I do believe he is the nicest gentleman I ever saw.'

Juliet dismissed the girl and tore open the letter. It had been written at eleven, and contained an urgent request for one more meeting before he left. 'Come to me in the small drawing-room,' he wrote. 'I will wait for you there, dear, even if I have to wait all night. I have much to say to you, much that is most important. Do not think of refusing this; it is my only chance of speaking to you, and there are things that ought to be said.'

'Shall I go?' thought Juliet. She put this question to herself, but in her heart she never doubted that she must go. She looked at her watch. It was now nearly one; he must have been waiting for hours, but she knew he would still be there. She flung a warm cloak over her white silk dress, softly opened the door, and slowly and timidly stole down to the small drawing-room.

CHAPTER III.

'YOUR TEARS DO NOT MOVE ME.'

Was ever match clapt up so suddenly?

Taming of the Shrew.

A night is but small breath and little pause,
To answer matters of this consequence.

Henry IV.

It was late for Mr. Gerard to be up, but when he went to his room he did not feel as if he could go to bed. His mind was so excited by this unexpected meeting with the son of his dear friend and benefactor, that sleep was altogether out of the question, so he threw himself down in a chair and began to think. What a long way back his thoughts had to travel before they reached that portion of the past during which he and the Aylesbury of other years, who lived again in the young man whom he had just

seen, dwelt together in brotherly fellowship! It was twenty-seven years since the Bishop had died, and it would soon be fifty since they had left Cambridge together. Mr. Gerard had spent a great portion of his life in ignorance of the fact that his friend had left a child, and had doubtless lost repeated opportunities of giving help to that child when help was most needed.

'And I was not half kind enough to the poor young fellow to-night,' thought the old man. 'It must be a terrible thing to be ordered off out of the country in this way, and it is quite evident that there is something he is not happy about. I shall not see him again in the morning. I did so want to say that I should like to get up early to say good-bye to him, but I was so afraid of his thinking me and my affection a nuisance. I wish I had said a little more when we parted. I wanted to repeat my wish that he should look on me as a father to whom he could come in any trouble, and to assure him that my heart shall always be open to him and my help never denied. It is very mortifying to have expressed myself so inadequately while I was feeling as anxious for his happiness as if he had been my own son.'

Little as Mr. Gerard had to reproach himself with on this score, he did reproach himself, and most bitterly, and he could find no peace until it occurred to him that he could write what he had been unable to say. He took a pen at once and wrote as his heart dictated; but how was he to ensure this note being given to Aylesbury before his hurried departure next morning? It was now midnight, or near it; perhaps some of the servants were still up and about. He took a candle, and, letter in hand, went noiselessly downstairs. The rooms were all empty—no servant was to be seen. At last, rather than go back to his room with his errand unsped, Mr. Gerard was fain to follow an inspiration which suddenly came to him. He went into the outer hall, and laid the letter down on the mat by the door, with the address turned so as to face anyone about to leave the house. This address was so plainly written in such large characters, and with such very black ink, that any servant who saw it could read it, and the very oddity of the place that had been chosen would fix the letter in his remembrance. 'That will do,' thought Mr. Gerard; 'it will do capitally! There will not be many of the servants up at six. Perhaps no one will go near the door till it is opened for that dear boy. I like the idea that the last thing that happens to him on leaving the house will be receiving a kind word from me!'

Happy in mind now, Mr. Gerard began to return to his own

room. As he reached the landing which led to it, he saw under a small jet of gas a card hanging on the wall which he had not previously observed. It was intended as a help to visitors and visitors' servants with short memories, and gave a list of the occupants of each room on that floor, and the numbers on the doors of their rooms. 'No. 5, Mrs. Cradock. No. 6, Mr. Gerard. No. 7, Miss Juliet Cradock.' This prompted him to go to the floor above, where, as he had expected, he found a similar card, and learnt that Aylesbury slept in No. 9.

Then he went back to the hall for his letter, and took it to No. 9. The door was slightly open. He knocked, but no one answered. He knocked again, with a similar result. After a moment's hesitation he went in. Aylesbury was not there. 'He is in the smoking-room perhaps,' thought Mr. Gerard, 'but I can't find my way there. Besides, if I leave my letter here, that is the best thing I can do.' He laid it on the dressing-table, and felt that this was a better place than the mat. Then he set out on his way back to his own room. As he passed Mrs. Cradock's door, he heard it open and some one begin to come out, but the person, whosoever it was, was arrested by a very angry voice, and he heard the words, 'It's no use crying; your tears don't move me in the least.' That was all he heard, except a fresh outbreak of weeping from some one just by the door. He was vexed at having heard what was not intended for his ears, but it was not his fault. Doubtless Mrs. Cradock was carrying out her intention of upbraiding her niece for encouraging ineligible suitors. The scolding was severe. Why did not the old lady take a more generous view of the situation? She was a millionaire, and could give a handsome dowry without so much as missing it. Why did she not give it, and smooth the path of the two poor lovers? Which of the two young men was the one for whose sake Miss Juliet was being reprimanded so severely? Was it the haggard author or the sad-looking and departing Aylesbury? If the latter, Mr. Gerard began to think that he could easily find it in his heart to mulct himself of a sum which might produce a change in the outlook of the young couple.

That cross old woman next door was still bullying her unfortunate niece. Mr. Gerard could hear her, even after he was shut in his own room again. London houses, however high their rent may be, never leave you in much doubt as to whether an animated conversation in the adjoining room has been brought to a close or not. This was a very animated one. No word reached his ears,

but the accent of Mrs. Cradock's voice pierced its way through the thin walls, and he heartily pitied that poor girl. 'I shall see her looking like a ghost to-morrow,' he thought; 'why can't that wretched old woman hold her tongue, and go to bed?'

He went to bed, and ere long he heard Mrs. Cradock's door close gently, and the sound of a silk dress lightly rustling by, and then all was quiet. In spite of this, the tired traveller could not sleep. What a day of fatigue and excitement it had been! It seemed months since he had left his own home, where the days of his life had passed in such placid happiness, that to him they only seemed to be undistinguishable parts in a chain of 'linked sweetness long drawn out.' What a cruel thing that he should find Aylesbury's boy just when he must lose him again! How strange it would be to see Mrs. Cradock and Juliet next day wearing their company faces! One thought after another coursed through his mind, and the later it grew the more wakeful he became. His midnight rambles had unsettled him; now he could not help fancying that he heard the sound of doors opening and shutting, of stealthy footsteps, and rustling dresses. If he did not shake off these fancies and conquer some sleep for himself somehow, he would be ill next day. He began to count sheep passing through a gap, and amused himself by inventing ingenious impediments in the way of their approach. That was not efficacious. He got up and walked about the room. He went back to bed, but sleep was as far from him as before. He expanded his lungs by drawing repeated long deep breaths, but no feeling of drowsiness rewarded him. He practised every sleep-compelling expedient he had any knowledge of. All was done in vain, but at length, as day broke, he became unconscious. He did not know that he had slept; he imagined certain sounds that he heard to be part and parcel of a series of disturbances which had conspired to keep him awake all night; but suddenly he became aware that some one was standing by his bedside trying to arouse him, and at the same time urgently impressing on him the necessity of being quiet. It was Aylesbury! Mr. Gerard stared at him with eyes wide open and full of inquiry, but no surprise or alarm. He had recognised that London was not Limberthwaite, and was not startled when he found himself confronted by anything unexpected and unusual.

'I found your letter on my dressing-table an hour or two ago, sir,' said Aylesbury. 'It was very kind of you to write it—most kind, and I am most grateful. I thank you for it from the bottom

of my heart! You say that you will gladly do anything you can for me, and I have come to take you at your word. I want you to do something for me now—something very particular.'

An ordinary man might have recoiled a little at this, and have felt a momentary doubt of a young man who showed such promptitude in accepting offers of assistance from one who, a few hours before, had been a stranger to him; but Mr. Gerard was generous and true to the heart's core. His letter had been absolutely sincere, and he proved it by saying, without a moment's hesitation, 'Speak, my dear boy; all I can say is, if it be possible, it shall be done.'

'Do you really mean that?' exclaimed Aylesbury, with great eagerness. 'Will you do it, even if it should seem very strange to you? It is something strange.'

'I don't care how strange it is—I will do it, provided only it is nothing wrong.'

'Oh no, sir, it is not wrong, but I am afraid you will think it very strange.'

'Never mind the strangeness, if that be all! Let me hear what it is. Do not hesitate: again I say, I am ready to perform any service in my power for you.'

'Then, sir, will you perform the marriage-service?' said Aylesbury, falling into what might have seemed an intentional play on words, in the difficulty he felt in preferring this request. 'I want you to be so very kind as to get up at once and marry me before I leave London, which I must do in less than two hours.'

Mr. Gerard had for some minutes been half sitting, half leaning on one elbow on his pillow, to listen to what Aylesbury had to say. On hearing this he started, and sat bolt upright, staring at him. 'Impossible!' he exclaimed. 'Quite impossible! You do not know what you are asking!'

'Ah, that is always the way,' said Aylesbury hopelessly. 'That is what I was afraid of. People make you all kinds of generous offers, and then, when you go and ask them to do something, they tell you it is impossible.'

'But it is!' said Mr. Gerard decidedly, 'it really is. I'd give anything to be of assistance to you in any reasonable way, but how can I do this? Even if I were willing, I should not be able. You are thinking of Australia, where things are probably done much more easily, but here all kinds of formalities have to be observed, and we have no choice about it, for if we disregard them, the marriage is illegal.'

'Every formality shall be observed; I am thoroughly prepared for the emergency. I have been urging the lady to take this step for some time. Here is the license—it is a special license; we can be married at any hour, and in any place. We are both of age. All that is wanted is a clergyman and two witnesses—the witnesses are found, so if you consent all is ready.'

Mr. Gerard's face had for some time revealed considerable disquietude and alarm.

'For heaven's sake,' said he, 'do not ask such a thing! Marry if you like, but do it as other people do! Why should you——?'

Aylesbury interrupted him: 'Time is so precious, sir,' said he, 'and we are losing so much of it. Let me try to explain everything to you in a few words. If I cannot persuade you to do this, you will send me away in misery. First, let me tell you that a fortnight ago I obtained Juliet's consent and got the license. A clergyman friend of mine was to have performed the ceremony, by daylight, and in his own church, but I was foolish and jealous. Juliet and I had a quarrel, and our project came to an end. To-night I have her forgiveness, and now if you will but do what I ask you, you will make us happy and bring a sense of security into our lives which will be an inexpressible comfort to us.'

'But you are going away to India. You will be parted whether you are married or not. Surely you need no security of this sort. Can you not pledge your faith to each other and be true?'

'Oh, that is not the kind of security I mean,' exclaimed Aylesbury; 'we should not be good for much if that were what we wanted. We perfectly trust each other. My difficulty is that my dear Juliet—I dare say you remarked her at dinner—is living in a terribly dependent position with a lady of a very uncertain temper. You know her—I saw you talking to her; but what she said to you of course gave you no hint of her temper. Juliet is not Mrs. Cradock's own niece; she is the daughter of a brother of Mr. Cradock's, and she was left an orphan years ago. She was penniless, but her rich uncle adopted her and promised to leave her a handsome fortune. When he died, however, it was found that every farthing of his money was bequeathed to his widow, to dispose of as she liked, and now whenever she is in a good humour she says Juliet shall be her heir, and whenever she is in a bad one she declares that, so far as she is concerned, Juliet shall die a beggar.'

'Miss Juliet must bear her ill-temper till you come back, and then——'

'Oh, if that were all, she would do it, but what if the old lady turns her out of the house? She is quite capable of doing that, I assure you. She has been talking to her to-night about some wretched old man whom she wishes her to marry, just because he is a baronet, and if Juliet refuses him, she will be turned out of doors.'

'Then she can come to us. I am sure my wife would be kind to her.'

'But I want to make Juliet's future really secure, and if you don't marry us now I can do nothing.'

'Mrs. Cradock will be much more offended and angry with her niece if she marries you—and in this secret way, too; why, even I could not forgive a niece of mine if she did such a thing!'

'Mrs. Cradock is not to know,' exclaimed Aylesbury. 'Of course not! No one is to know but you and the witnesses. Our marriage is to be a profound secret.'

'Then, what earthly good will it do Miss Juliet? I don't call that securing her future; her aunt will urge her to marry this other man, and quarrel with her if she refuses, just the same.'

'Oh, yes, it will do good—let me tell you how. Juliet does not know my true reason for wishing this; it would distress her terribly if she did. I am, as you know, leaving this country in a few hours. I am bound to a part of India where several of the native regiments are in open revolt. The mutiny seems spreading, and though we are certain to be able to put it down, it mayn't be done so easily as people seem to think, so I want Juliet to marry me now; for if I die she will have a pension of three hundred a year, and, little as it is, it will be enough to protect her from her aunt's tyranny. She could live on three hundred a year, if her aunt turned her out of doors.'

'My poor boy,' said Mr. Gerard fervently, 'your Juliet should always have a home with me.'

'She might not like to accept it—and you, sir, are not young—oh, be kind to me; you do not know how miserable I am, or how hard it is to leave her. I do not expect to come back again. I have a presentiment that my life will soon be ended. Let me go away knowing that I have done something for her.'

'One more objection,' said Mr. Gerard, who was slowly yielding. 'You will come back, my dear boy—people always have presentiments of this kind—but you will come back, I hope

and trust, and then you will find that Mrs. Cradock will be doubly furious when she learns the secret that you have been keeping from her. She will cast off Miss Juliet for ever, and you will find that you have not enough to live on. Miss Juliet has been brought up extravagantly; she certainly could not live on your pay.'

'Of course not; but we should probably have more by that time. My father left some money; at present I let my mother's mother have all of it, but she is a very old woman, and cannot possibly live long. When she dies I shall be much better off. I don't want to be dependent on Mrs. Cradock's favour. I want to keep my wife myself. But won't you come, sir? It is getting so late.'

'Young man, you want me to do what is very repugnant to my——'

'Oh, sir, you did say you would do anything in your power to serve me.'

'I know I did, but this is such an extreme step! Is the young lady prepared for it? Would she——?'

'She is prepared; it has taken me quite two hours to persuade her, but I have done it. Please get up, sir. If you won't be persuaded under two hours, too, there will not be time. I shall have to go at six, and it is twenty minutes to five now.'

'I think, perhaps, I had better get up and speak to Miss Juliet myself,' remarked Mr. Gerard, and then Aylesbury knew that he had at last carried his point.

'I will go and tell her that you are coming, then,' said he. 'I will return for you in ten minutes. Just throw on your clothes anyhow.'

'My morning clothes are gone,' observed Mr. Gerard, ruefully.

'Never mind that, sir, we are all in evening-dress. I shall have to put on some other clothes though, and quickly too;' so saying, Aylesbury left the room.

Great as Mr. Gerard's love for his lost friend was, he hated the thought of what he was now half pledged to do. He was a clergyman of nearly half a century's standing, and had always been a stickler for strict obedience to the rules of his profession. A marriage such as this would be undoubtedly legal, therefore he would be technically in the right if he performed it; but to Mr. Gerard's mind, nothing could really be right that would infallibly evoke such a storm of criticism as this would when the circumstances came to be known. He sighed. He was imbued

with a large measure of English detestation of being talked about. How this would be discussed, and what scandals might even be hinted at! Then he felt his cheeks burn, for the last occasion when he had flushed beneath the gaze of his fellow-creatures came to his mind, and it was when he was a sizar at Trinity, standing in the gallery waiting for his turn to dine, and side by side with him had stood this young man's father, who need not have been there. He had voluntarily subjected himself to the mortification of a sizar's life for the sake of helping the friend who now shrank from making the return demanded by a poor boy who was leaving his country, heart-broken by the knowledge that the woman he loved might be driven from her home any day at the caprice of an ill-tempered old woman. 'Poor fellow!' thought Mr. Gerard, 'of course I will marry him to her. That idea of his about securing a pension to her in this way really is most ingenious. Of course it will comfort him to think that, alive or dead, he will now be able to secure her from poverty.'

'Yes, I am ready,' he said, when Aylesbury reappeared, 'quite ready, and I am perfectly willing to do what you wish. I can't think what made me hesitate. I suppose your request seemed rather strange to me at first.' Such was the change which had been wrought by the hurried flight taken by his mind into that bitterly felt time at college.

Aylesbury grasped his hand in the warmest gratitude. 'Don't let us speak as we go,' he said; 'it would not do to disturb old Mrs. Cradock.'

Juliet was sitting in a low chair in the back drawing-room. She was buried in her cloak. Nothing of her could be seen but her pale resolute face, which was somewhat disfigured by recent weeping. Daylight was streaming in and pitilessly revealing the ravages which this night of emotion had caused. She looked up as Mr. Gerard approached, tried to say something, and failed. Aylesbury went to her, gently smoothed away a bit of hair which had got loose and was lying on her cheek. Then he took her hand and led her to the table by which Mr. Gerard was now standing examining the license. 'My dear child,' said he, 'I am ready. I am going to do what you both wish. It is a sad and troubled beginning to your married life—God grant that all the rest of it may be full of happiness and peace.'

Juliet drew a quick breath that sounded very like a sob, but Aylesbury pressed her hand affectionately, and there was something in his grasp which gave her courage. The two witnesses now

appeared ; these were Dorothy and one of Mrs. Freeman's footmen to whom she was engaged to be married, and whom she had bound over to secrecy. In a very few minutes Godfrey Aylesbury and Juliet Cradock were man and wife.

'Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,' Mr. Gerard had read, but they were to be parted immediately—perhaps for ever. Aylesbury had gloomy forebodings. Perhaps poor Juliet had too—her eyes rested on him she loved with something of the pathetic distress of a mother who sees a beloved child within appreciable distance of being touched by the hand of death.

When they rose from their knees, Aylesbury kissed Juliet, and said, 'God bless and protect you while I am away, my dear wife!'

'Amen,' responded Mr. Gerard. 'God bless and protect you both, then and always!' Juliet could not bear to look at Aylesbury : those words meant so much when addressed to one who was going to face so many dangers as he. Then Aylesbury shook hands with Mr. Gerard and said, 'This is the kindest act you have ever done ; I go away almost happy.' Juliet, too, went up to him and put her trembling hand in his—her eyes spoke for her ; her tongue refused to utter an intelligible sound.

'My dear child,' said Mr. Gerard, 'you and I will have the opportunity of getting to know each other better. I want you to treat me as if I were your husband's father.' Then he left them to say a few last words to each other ; but brief enough would be the time for that, for even on the stairs he encountered a servant hurrying to make preparations for Aylesbury's breakfast and departure. At six o'clock, Mr. Gerard stood in the hall while Aylesbury's luggage was being put on the cab. No other friend was there to see him go. It was soon done : one warm grasp of Mr. Gerard's hand, and then the hall-door closed, and all was over. No, all was not over, for Aylesbury looked up to the windows above, saw the corner of one blind lifted, and knew that his Juliet was there.

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

TO a distant observer, placed in a city which notoriously stands by the Northern sea, there does not appear to be any particularly epoch-making new book at present. But there is a number of agreeable new works which it seems easiest to talk about in a 'Dialogue of the Dead.' I had fondly conceived that this novelty was my own invention. Long since I made trial of it in an evening paper; that was the year when Mr. Lecky, at the Royal Academy dinner, made startling proclamation of a poet whom he had discovered. But M. Anatole France has also varied his reviewing by this device of the dialogue in his new volume of *La Vie Littéraire*, and his may be the priority of invention. Or, again, as Mark Twain insists, we may have unconsciously communicated with each other by mental telegraph. See the learned Mark in *Harper's Magazine*, Christmas number.

* * *

ELYSIUM.

Mr. James Thompson (excitedly). What! my *City of Dreadful Night* in grey paper covers at a shilling! Here is fame! There is, then, such a thing as posterity. But *why* is it attributed to Mr. Rudyard Kipling? (*Turning over the leaves*) Has he edited it into prose?

Mr. Clough. Nay, if you will but look at a little inserted slip you will see, my Thompson, that the publishers gave the name (I grieve to pain you) in ignorance of the existence of your poem.

Mr. Thompson. On earth, to-day, is it the publisher or the author who christens the book?

Sir Walter. Ha! my old friend Mr. Constable was ever for being sponsor to my tales. He would have called the *Abbot* by

the name of the *Nunnery*, though, indeed, there was not a veil in the piece. 'Mr. Accoucheur,' I said, 'must you be setting up for Mr. Sponsor too?' But he had his way with *Rob Roy*.

Mr. Clough. Still it is odd; for if Mr. Kipling's publishers knew not Mr. Thompson's poem by name Mr. Kipling knows it, and, my Thompson, is ever quoting it. Once, indeed, Mr. Kipling attributed to the *City of Dreadful Night* my own verses in the Ode on Easter Day:

We are most hopeless who had once most hope,
And most beliefless who had most believed,

Sir Walter (aside). I envy neither of you the lines. But is this a good new story of this most ingenious and spirited young gentleman's?

Mr. Thompson. The new *City of Dreadful Night*, though advertised as 'a new story,' is a set of newspaper articles. Picturesque reporting; no story at all.

Sir Walter.

*I'm sorry for Mr. Bluebeard,
I'm sorry to cause him pain,
But a terrible spree there's sure to be
When he comes back again.*

Where did I read that *chanson*? Surely in a tale of Mr. Kipling's own—*The Man who Was*.

Mr. Clough. Here is poetry, at all events, Oxford poetry too.

Dr. Johnson. Is it by a Pembroke man, sir? We were a nest of singing birds in Pembroke when I was a young man.

Mr. Clough. Faith, there is no name nor college given by the poet of *Love Lies Bleeding* (Blackwell, Oxford). The author only offers a motto from the Anthology.

ναυηγού τάφος εἰμί, σὺ δὲ πλέε· καὶ γὰρ ὅθ' ἡμεῖς
ἀλλύμεθ', αἱ λοιπαὶ νῆες ἐποντοπόρουν.

(Tomb of a shipwrecked seafarer am I,
But thou, sail on!
For homeward safe did other vessels fly,
Though we were gone.)

And woebegone is the poetry, sad as night, yet choicely good.

Listen !

THE LONELY LANDSCAPE.

The place again—
The wooded heights—the widening plain—
The whispering pines—the dry-leaved oaks, too young
To cast their dead dreams ere the new be sprung !

What profits it
Alone on this prone slope to sit
Where thou didst press the heath,—and see how dun
The landscape seems, lit only by the sun ?

Yet ah ! not vain
To visit thy fair haunts again—
To trace thy footprints by the upturned stone,
And conjure back thy looks, thy words, thy tone !

Like music fine,
That simple-seeming speech of thine
Hath in it soft harmonics, only heard
When from the memory fades the uttered word.

And to mine eyes,
Undazzled by thy self, doth rise
An image lovelier and more like to thee
Than even thy bodily self which sight can see.

Ah !—The wind shakes
The withered leaves, and Love awakes,
And to the vacant landscape cries in vain,
' Ah, Heaven ! to have her at my side again !'

Sir Walter (aside). Alas ! Yet why ' alas ' ? *Humana per-*
pessi sumus. (*Aloud*) Has he more of that melancholy matter ?

Mr. Clough. Here is a fine simile.

BURNT OUT.

One word, and only one,
Before I go !
One sigh and all is done !
Alas, not so !

Though Love that was my light
Is lost for aye,
My course is set too right
To swerve or stray.

Though Love be clean put out,
Yet must I run
A lifeless world about
A lightless sun.

The verse is often excellent in this little work, and the tone, I think, is sincere. But what will the author do when he ceases singing of his mistress's eyebrow? Who can tell, except that if art (as you, Mr. Thompson, did not think) is dedicated to joy this artist has still his lesson to learn?

Dr. Johnson. Joy, sir, or at least a certain exhilaration of the spirits, which I presume to be youthful, animates our latest critic, Miss Agnes Repplier. I never held a high opinion of our rebel colonies, but I confess that, for once, Boston has produced a work which does not disgust by its insignificance nor puzzle by its pedantries. *Points of View*, by Miss Agnes Repplier, is written, sir, with vivacity and spirit. I regret that I never took tea with Miss Repplier.

Sir Walter. Indeed, it is excellent. I find Miss Repplier standing up for the fair fame of Cervantes, who, after all, was not melancholy mad. *Don Quixote*, as the fair critic quotes Mr. Shorthouse, 'will come in time to be recognised as one of the saddest books ever written,' and, as she herself observes, 'if the critics keep on expounding it much longer I truly fear it will. It may be urged that Cervantes himself was low enough to think it exceedingly funny.'

Dr. Johnson. 'Funny,' sir, is a low word, a word no lady should employ. But I pardon Miss Repplier, for she disdains the blighting terms in which Mr. Frederic Harrison sets about to prove that *Robinson Crusoe* is instructive. 'Is there no longer,' Miss Repplier asks, 'such a thing as a recognised absurdity in the world?' Sure those mortals, as our author declares, 'are very scholarly and comfortless.'

Sir Walter. Faith, I think we had better hide this lively tract from two of our lady friends, Miss Austen and Miss Brontë. Here is Miss Repplier reminding us of what, I vow, I had forgotten—that Miss Brontë called Miss Austen 'milk-and-watery' and 'dull.'

Dr. Johnson. Sir, you need be in no apprehension. When did woman ever yet forget? My little Fanny has often told me the entertaining things that Miss Austen utters here about Miss Brontë.

Cervantes. Would that my countrymen had never discovered America! There would have been no Boston, no Miss Repplier, and I should never have known that Mr. Swinburne thinks I strongly resemble Miss Brontë, and that her little French pedagogue, Paul Emmanuel, is akin to the ingenious gentleman of *La Mancha*.

Sir Walter. You speak of Monsieur Paul Emmanuel? I would not seem ill-natured, but I confess that I never could abide a dominie. Miss Brontë's heroine in *Villette* should have sung—

When book and gown are a' cried down
Nae dominies for me, laddie.

And of all dominies . . . but *tace* is Latin for a candle. Here come Miss Austen and Miss Brontë in loving conversation.

* * *

Enough of the dead. The temptation to make Moses and Nehemiah discuss Dr. Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* is coming on, and must be firmly resisted. It would be distinctly wrong to yield; besides, I share what Principal Cave, in the *Contemporary Review*, calls 'the common and aristocratic assumption that these questions of Old Testament criticism are questions for accomplished Hebraists alone.' What is there 'aristocratic' in this opinion? Would anybody listen to a man who did not know Greek laying down the law about the Homeric controversy? Does the opinion of a person who has no Sanskrit bear any weight in a critical discussion of the Rig Veda? Oriental scholars must do the criticism of the Old Testament, and, when they have stated their cases, then the public is the jury to which they appeal. Probably all are agreed about that, but surely it is as evident that a student with no Hebrew has no right to plunge into the controversy. A curious thing theological controversy is. In Principal Cave's article on Dr. Driver's book he quotes Dr. Driver: 'The price at which alone the traditional view can be maintained is too high.' Surely the sense of this is as clear as a chalk-stream. Dr. Driver thinks that a certain view can only be held at the price of giving up the ordinary tests of evidence. But his opponent interprets him thus; 'He suggests that

those who do not agree with his school sustain the traditional view for a price'—that their opinions are bought and bribed, in fact. If the learned Principal gets this meaning out of Dr. Driver's English, what meanings may he not get out of Moses's Hebrew? Apparently the first thing that some disputants do is absolutely to misunderstand their opponents. Dr. Driver says that the friends of a certain theory *pay* an intellectual price, and Principal Cave declares that he says they *take* a price—obviously a material subvention. This kind of thing is enough to make us give up the proud boast that Man is a rational animal.

* *

The readers of these pages have once, ere now, helped me to the answer of a question that puzzled me. Indeed, the number of correct answers was almost embarrassing. One answer—correct—to the following query will be gratefully welcomed: *Who was Wude Willie Grime?* in English, Mad Willie Grahame? He is mentioned in *Waverley*, vol. ii. chap. x. (edition of 1829), as a person scarcely less notorious for his cruelties than Wallace for his military exploits. But the memory of Mr. Grime seems to have vanished into air. He is not to be found in chap books, nor in county histories, nor by dint of teasing Scotch antiquaries. Another person is sadly to seek—namely, the Professor of Legerdemain, who, being an astrologer, cast his own horoscope. He found a space of two years on which the stars cast no light. At the beginning of it he was certainly alive, at the end of it he was assuredly dead. The middle period was a blank. When the due time arrived the poor man was smitten by paralysis, and became idiotic, dying at the end of the dark period. The story is in the introduction to *Guy Mannering* (edition of 1829 and subsequent editions). But the name of the conjurer is not given, nor can astrologers give any information about him. He seems to have died between 1815 and 1829, and it is stated that his diary was perhaps to be published. He must have been a person of some note, but he is forgotten, like the ferocious William Grime. It seems not improbable that many allusions in Dickens and Thackeray will soon become as obscure as these and others in the *Waverley* novels.

* *

The following curious piece of modern Greek folklore is communicated by Mr. Robertson, of Kirkwall, and was obtained by

him from a native of Smyrna. The Greeks of Asia Minor, it seems, believe in a frog-god, or rather in a spiritual representative and chief of frogs:—‘His name is pronounced Vathrachou. He has under his protection the whole race of frogs, and also many small insects and reptiles, and if a Smyrniote sees you attempt to hurt one of those he warns you to beware lest Vathrachou haunt you. Although he is a spirit he does not seem able to divest himself entirely of the flesh, but he has a most uncanny power of growing big or small at will—like Alice when she followed the white rabbit—and crawls in through the keyhole to the room of an offender against his tribe, once in the room swells to enormous proportions, and smothers or suffocates his victim, or at least terrifies him to the verge of lunacy.’

This faith corresponds to totemism as it exists in Samoa, where each creature has its essential supernatural protector, which is immortal. This or that owl dies, for example, but the ideal owl, incarnate in all of them, never dies. If a Samoan eats his totem he is punished by the creature coming to life within him and devouring his vitals. Does *Vathrachou*, that spirited batrachian, come down from an age when the Greeks of the Asiatic coast were more civilised than the Samoans? Mr. Stevenson, by the way, has found in Samoa the belief in a supernatural sound of an axe and of crashing timber where there is really no earthly woodman at work. This belief was first noted in Ceylon, where an English lady heard and reported (in *Macmillan's Magazine*, ‘The Pezazi’) the mystic sounds. I then came on the belief in Sahagun’s account of the Aztec religion. Next Mr. Leslie Stephen noted that De Quincey’s brother brought the story from the Galapagos islands, and now Mr. Stevenson meets it in Samoa. Mr. Stevenson finds, however, no such explanatory legend of a supernatural being as Sahagun discovered among the Aztecs immediately after their conquest by the Spaniards. I do not know ‘the Midnight Axe’—so the Aztecs called it—in Europe. The distribution of the idea is curiously sporadic. I have lost the reference to ‘The Mystery of the Pezazi’ in *Macmillan's Magazine*, but the curious will find it readily—in the indexes.

* * *

Where will not culture find a niche? *Phaon and Sappho*, a drama in blank verse, and a very remarkable piece in its way, is the work of a rural postman in Cornwall. Mr. Hosken, the author, shows wide reading in Greek literature, and his brief preface

displays a fine historical sense, though the play does not pretend to historical accuracy. The tone is rather frankly Elizabethan. As plays do not readily submit to be extracted from, let us take the closing lyric of the volume.

LOVE AND EARTH'S ECHOES.

1 *Lover.*

Love that is spoken often dies
Quick as the light in evening skies,
Or as a song upon the ear,
And leaves no answering spirit near.
Wilt thou be true? Shall I ne'er rue
My plighted faith? Wilt thou be true?

Echo.

Wilt thou be true?

2 *Lover.*

That doubt, O maiden, do not name;
Changeless as yon eternal flame
My spirit evermore shall be
In its full worshipping of thee.
I will be true! Thou shalt not rue
Thy plighted faith. I will be true!

Echo.

I will be true.

1 *Lover.*

O Love, I mourned thy broken faith,
And now I live to mourn thy death,
And, like the echo ringing clear,
Thy voice was false within my ear.
'I will be true.' O echo earth,
Are these things only for your mirth?

Echo.

Only for—mirth.

Phaon and Sappho is published by Mr. F. Rodda, Penzance. The price is but two shillings, and lovers of poetry may do worse than purchase this very singular flower of Cornish lanes and sea-banks, so creditable to the ingenuity and enterprise of the author.

The novelist's trade, like that of him who gathers samphire, is 'dreadful.' There is far too much competition. If you want a box of books from a circulating library, the chances are that you get seven volumes which you never asked for to three which you did demand. Nobody asks for those superfluous seven—nobody but friends of the authors. Probably ladies read them when they find them in the box, but nobody wants them. They never would be missed. Their existence manifestly interferes with the success of books which are in demand. Suppose that circulating libraries, instead of buying many small doses of rubbish, were to spend the money in getting more copies of good, or at least of popular, new novels; then the amateurs and weaklings of romance would be driven out of the business, and from the libraries we might get the works we ask for. I have just observed a student marking the library catalogue. Out of 270 novels of the year 254 were erased, and it was communicated to the librarian that none of these were to be sent on any account. Perhaps two dozen of them had been read before, and so were not needed; the remaining 230 were manifestly trash. There were left sixteen, of which twelve at least were experimental. Only four were asked for in anything like assured hope of entertainment. Of lady novelists there were eighty-one. Of domestic and tea-table novels there were forty. Of novels about American women there were six; of military and sporting romances, twelve; of historical novels only five. There were about ten sensational novels. Then there were Dutch, Irish, Australian, Arabic, Bohemian, Hungarian, Indian novels, and of Egyptian novels and novels in No Man's Land about five. There were not so many socialistic, occult, and theological novels as one might expect, while governesses and the clergy were in a minute minority. Of novels that a male human being might read there were about forty out of the grand total of 270, and that is really a very fair proportion. The rest were all for ladies, who in these cases are apt to let the supply regulate the demand. Ah, that authors would not write, that publishers would not publish, that libraries would not buy the common, mild, middle-class domestic novel any more! The writers who have succeeded in that style may be counted on the fingers of one hand, and yet that is the style which men and women, with no qualification but leisure, are always attempting.

A. LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following sums. Contributions received after December 8 will be acknowledged in the February number :—

Georgina Corbett 2*l*. Mabel Jacob and Willie Jacob 1*l*. 11*s*. 8*d*. Mrs. Gibbins (Donna) 10*s*. Beatrice 1*s*. Marjorie 4*d*. Wilfred 4*d*. Mrs. Gibbins (Night Refuge) 10*s*. A. Conan Doyle 1*l*. 1*s*. Mrs. F. H. Penfold 2*s*. 6*d*. Mrs. G. C. Gare 1*l*. C. C. 10*s*. Miss Briggs 1*l*. Mrs. Courtney 1*l*.

Also from Mrs. Newson, 8 scarves; A Lady, 8 pairs of muffetees and a comforter; L. Harvey, 10 scarves and 6 chest protectors; Mrs. Lodge, comforters; H. Heritage, a parcel of clothing.

The Sisters have received the following :—Miss Gordon, Swinton Dewis, N.B. large parcel of men's clothes; the Rev. Allott, scarves and mittens; Rev. J. Smith, Lee, S.E., 5*s*.; Mrs. Pigura, Plymouth, 5 scarves; Miss Hay, South Australia, scarves and waistcoats. Per Miss Trench 1*l*. 5*s*.; Paranaqua, scarves; Mrs. Millard, scarves.

To A. F. P.—'Yes, and we shall have some more sent.'

The Editor has received the following nice letter from Mabel and Willie Jacob :—

'Ardview, Tramore, Co. Waterford,

'November 27, 1891.

D EAR MR. EDITOR,—Our governess told us about the "Donna," supported by the readers of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE, and as we wished to help, we had a sale of work in our schoolroom. We made most of the things ourselves. We sold 1*l*. 11*s*. 8*d*. worth, and send you the money for the poor men. We tell you how we got the money, so that if you let other children know through your magazine, it might give them the idea to help in the same way.

'We remain, yours sincerely,

'MABEL JACOB } Aged 10 and 12.'
'WILLIE JACOB }

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

The Editor of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE,

39 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.